An Exhortation to Repentance, *and* Union *among*

PROTESTANTS.

[John Shower]
S3663.

OR A

DISCOURSE

Upon The

BURDEN of DUMAH.

Isaiah. XXI. 11, 12.

He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, *what of the Night?* Watchman, *what of the Night? The Watchman said, the* Morning *cometh, and also the* Night: *if ye will Enquire,* Enquire *ye: Return, Come.*

Math. 12. 25. *Every Kingdom divided against it self, is brought to desolation; and every City or House divided against it self, shall not stand.*

Phil. 2. 1–4. *If there be therefore any Consolation in Christ, if any comfort of Love, if any Fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done thro strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man at his own things, but every man also at the things of others.*

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PREFACE.

THE *Danger, which threatens the* Proteſtant Intereſt *at this day is ſo viſible to every Eye, that 'twere a needleſs Labour to prove it. All the* Symptoms *that appear in the* Reformed Churches, *ſeem to preſage and ſignifie a diſmal* Criſis. *'Tis not poſſible, I confeſs, to make a certain Concluſion about the Event; neither is it our Duty to attempt it: But if the Cauſe of the* Reformation *from* Popery *be really ſo valuable and dear to us, as we profeſs; Every* Proteſtant *is obliged to afford his utmoſt Aſſiſtance for its preſervation. There are very many who think, this is ſufficiently ſecured by wiſe* Laws, *and learned* Diſputations; *both which have their uſe, but will never of themſelves be ſufficient to ſuch an End. Inward* Holineſs *and* Purity *are requiſite to ſecure a Doctrine, which bears thoſe Characters. If our Religion were of an* Earthly *Original and Conſtitution, it might be defended well enough by Human ſtrength and Policie, and ſuch methods as* Rome Pagan *and* Antichriſtian *have found Neceſſary for the ſupport of their Hierarchy. But a Doctrine which comes from* Heaven, *and leads thither, muſt have its chief ſupport from thence, and will be beſt maintain'd by a ſerious compliance with its Holy Deſign. And therefore after all the Books of Controverſie, wherby the falſe Principles of* Popery *have been expoſ'd and baffled, nothing but the* Love *of Truth, and* Obedience *to it, will be found an effectual* Bulwark *againſt the Corruptions and Deſigns of the* Roman Church. *There is no wicked man but needs ſuch an* Opium *as* Popery *to quiet his Conſcience, and reconcile a ſenſual ungodly Life with the Hopes of Heaven. He hath already receiv'd many Errors for Truth, and ſo is prepared to admit more: He is deſtitute of that which ſhould preſerve him from Deluſion: He never had any* Experience *of the Efficacy, and Certainty, the Truth and Power of the Principles of Religion, that ſhould ſettle and eſtabliſh him: He hath not that* Affection *to divine Truth, that ſhould make him diligent in ſearching after it; or that* Purity *of Heart which might enable him to receive the beams of Heavenly light. 'Tis only by the practical fear of God, or the keeping of his Commandments, that any can be aſſured to be* taught of God. *So that the moſt certain way to keep the* Faith, *is to keep a* good Conſcience *towards God and men.*

On the other hand, there is no ſuch Preparation *for* Popery *and other damnable Errors as a wicked Heart and Life. When men* receive not the Truth in the love of it, God ſends them ſtrong Deluſions to believe *Lies. If men are falſe and unfaithful to the Common Principles of* Chriſtianity; *if they*

resist the Light, and rebel against it; if they hold the Truth in unrighteousness; and debauch their Consciences by a vicious practice; they must needs distrelish and dislike Holy Truth: and having forfeited the Assistance of God, they are prepared for Sadducism, Deism, *or* Popery. *These Delusions do ordinarily enter at this back door. Men are sensual,* not having the spirit, *and then the Doctrines of the Gospel are* Foolishness *to them. This Consideration will both justifie the Providence of God, in permitting so many to be thus deceiv'd, and doth let us know what we are to expect concerning the* Generality *of Loose and Carnal* Protestants; *how unlikely they are to hold fast their Profession, if called to suffer much for it. They are built upon the Sand, and prepared for* Delusion; *and no wonder if they are blown up and down by every wind of False Doctrine; or tossed to and fro from* one *Religion to* another, *as to their* Profession, *when they have really none at all in the* Practice. *This method the* Romish Emissaries *have taken in all the Courts and Kingdoms of* Europe, *where they could have Admission: After the same manner that the* Devil *leads men to* Hell, *have they endeavor'd to bring men over to* their Church; *viz. by gratifying the Lusts of men, and promoting voluptuousness and sensuality, that mens Understandings being clouded, they might not discern the* Cheats *and* Impostures *of their Unscriptural Doctrines and Worship:*

It is therefore the great Interest of all true Protestants, *(who taking the H. Scriptures for the only Rule of their Faith, desires, and duty, have the same objective Religion, and are all of one Church,) to endeavor every one to* live better, *and to promote serious* Godliness *among others; especially if we are under any apprehensions and fears of the threatning Anger of God against us for the want of it. An* Union in this *would make it easy for us to bear with one another in Love, notwithstanding all our lesser Differences.*

This being recommended in the following Discourse, when the substance of it was not long since preacht to the English Congregation *here, the Printing of it was judg'd might be of some use, and to that end was desired by several. For the sake of our Brethren in* England *I have enlarged the latter part, as I did the former on another account. I am sensible, I have adventured the displeasing of many with the Hope that I may profit some; however, declaring my readiness and desire by further Light to be better inform'd, and praying for the* Peace of Jerusalem, *I recommend it to the Blessing of God.*

Rotterdam Aug. 11. 1688.

J. Shower.

An

THE BURDEN OF DUMAH

OR

A *Discourse* upon those words of the Prophet,

Isaiah, XXI. 11, 12.

The Burden of Dumah. *He calleth to me out of* Seir, *Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The Watchman said, the morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will Enquire, Enquire ye: Return, come.*

THE great difference among Interpreters is, whether by *Dumah* be meant the Country of the *Ishmaelites*, or that of the *Idumeans*; whether the Race of scoffing *Ishmael*, or the Posterity of prophane *Esau*. We read of one of *Ishmael's* Sons of that name, and that part of *Arabia*, where he seated himself, was called *Dumah* on that account. But the following expression, *One calleth to me out of Seir*, makes it more probable that the *Edomites* or *Idumeans* are understood, *Seir* being *the Land of Esau*, or *the Country of Edom*, which God gave to *Esau* and his Posterity, and would not permit the *Israelites* so much as to pass thro it, without their leave; Gen. 25. 14. Gen. 32. 3. 4.

Deut. 1. 40. which *Moſes* requeſted as their neareſt way to *Canaan*, but it was denied 'em, and they paſſed by the borders of *Idumea*, without entring into it.

For the better underſtanding of this and ſeveral other places of H. Scripture, I ſhall premiſe ſomewhat, 1. Concerning *Eſau*. 2. His *Country*. 3. The *Idumeans*, his Poſterity.

§ 1. Of *Eſau*, the Brother of *Jacob*, and Father of the *Idumeans*, we read that he is called *Edom*. *Gen.* 25. v. 30. Eſau, *quaſi Factus*, ſaith *Dr. Lightfoot*, being born *Hairy*, as if he had been Gen. 25. 25. Joſeph: Antiq: lib. 2. c. 1. of mature Age: or *Edom*, *red*, from the *Colour* of his Hair. And afterwards that name was confirm'd to him on the Sale of his Birthright, for *a meſs of red pottage*, to his Brother *Iacob*. The Contentions and Enmity that ſhould happen between the Poſterity of the two Brothers was prefignified by their ſtruggling in their Mother's Womb. *Gen.* 25. *The Lord ſaid unto* Rebecca, *two Nations are in thy Womb, and two manner of People ſhall be ſeparated from thy Bowels; and the one ſhall be ſtronger than the other, and the Elder* (Eſau) *ſhall ſerve the Younger.* This Oracle ſhe kept in her mind, and ſo firmly believ'd it, that when *Iacob* ſcrupled to follow her Counſel, as to the manner of obtaining his Father's Bleſſing, leſt inſtead of it, (being diſcovered) he ſhould meet Gen. 27. 12, 13. with a Curſe, ſhe tells him, *Upon me be thy Curſe, my ſon, only obey my voice.* It is not improbable that ſhe feared leſt the whole Family might otherwiſe be excluded from the Bleſſing of *Abraham*: apprehending, that God might juſtly diſannul the promiſe, as to *Eſau*, becauſe of his *Prophaneneſs*, which he diſcovered, not only by the contempt of the Bleſſing, in ſelling his ſhare in it, and right to it, with his Birthright, for ſo ſmall a matter, but in his Gen. 26. 34, 35. whole Converſation, eſpecially by his Marriage among the *Hittites*, who were under the Curſe of God, and to be rooted out. Concerning one of Eſau's Wives, 'tis ſaid expreſly, that ſhe was a Daughter of *Ishmael*; and by that marriage, (againſt the Conſent of his Parents, as is intimated by their grief and concern at it,) He endeavored to eſtabliſh the Pretenſions and Plea of *Ishmael*, the ſon of the Bondwoman, for the Bleſſing of *Abraham*, to the excluſion of his Father *Iſaac*, in whoſe line God had fixt it.

Heidegri Hiſt. Patriarch: de Eſavo. Diſſert. 12. Deut. 2. 12, 22. §2. Concerning the *Country* of *Eſau*. He at firſt inhabited the Eaſtern part of *Idumea*, and therein *Mount Seir*, or *the Land of Seir*, as 'tis called, *Gen.* 32. 3. But before *Iſrael* came out of *Ægypt*,

gypt, his Posterity slew the *Horites* or *Horims*, of the race of *Cham*, (who inhabited the southern part) and so possessed themselves of all *Idumea* (a) By the *South* is sometimes meant *Idumea*, and confounded with the Southern part of *Judaa*. *Esau* dwelt in *Seir* before the death of *Isaac*; for from thence he came in an Hostile manner to meet his Brother *Iacob*, returning from *Mesopotamia*, whither he had retired, after he got the Blessing, to avoid the Revenge which his Brother threatned. Upon their Reconciliation *Esau* returns to *Seir*. *Gen.* 32. 16. He came afterwards with his Family to *Hebron*; and was there with his Brother, at the Death and Funerals of their Father *Isaac*. But such was the Increase of the two Families, that the Land could not bear them both; there was not sufficient Pastorage for their Cattel: therefore *Esau* departed with his Family and Substance, and went to *Mount Seir*, and there remained the rest of his Life.

(a) *See* Spanhemii F. Hist. Jobi: c 4. *Gen* 32.

Gen. 36. 6, 7, 8.

He being the Prince of that Country, the adjoyning Red-sea had its name from him. *Solomon* is said to have sent ships to *Ophir, on the banks of the Red sea, in the Land of Edom*, 1 *Kings.* 9. c. 26. The Country of *Idumea* is commonly divided into the *Greater* and *Lesser*: the former swallowed up; (saith (a) *D*r. *Lightfoot*) under the name of *Arabia*, and the Lesser or new *Idumea* is mention'd by the Evangelist *Mark* 3 c. 8. which at length was a part of *Judaa*, as possessed by the *Idumeans*, after they were Proselites to the Jewish Religion. A (b) learned man hath lately attempted to prove the *Phanicians* and *Idumeans* to be all one: *Phanices dicti quasi Idumai, & rubri a mari Edom.*

Mare rubrum, mare Erithræum, vel mare Idumæum, ab Edomo vel Erithro, N. *Fulleri Misc.* 5. lib. 4. cap. 20.

(a) Decas chorag. marco præf. § 1. & 5. *Spanhemii* Hist. Jobi. cap 4.

§ 3. Concerning the *Edomites* or *Idumeans*, (who bordered on *Judaa*, as did the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, & *Ishmaelites*,) three things are observable.

(b) *Steph. Morini* Dissert: de cognatione Laced: & Hebræorum.

1. That notwithstanding their Agreement in *Circumcision*, yet the Jealousies and Contentions betweem them and the *Iews* were irreconcileable. They lookt upon their Father *Esau* as the *Firstborn*, and that by the priviledge of Primogeniture, the promised Blessing of the *Messiah* should come in his line: rivalling the *Israelites* as having no Right unto it, but by *Iacob's* supplanting their Father *Esau*. But God had particularly promised that Blessing to the line of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Iacob*. On this account he is so often stiled, *the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac*, and *the God of Iacob*, to denote a special Relation to the *Iews* as his

peculiar people, in oppoſition to the pretences of all their Neighbours. The God of *Abraham*, and not of *Lot*, againſt the *Moabites*, who deſcending from *Lot* pretended to the Bleſſing of the promiſed ſeed in that line. The God of *Iſaac*, and not of *Iſhmael*, againſt the *Iſhmaelites*, who to the like purpoſe pleaded the Primogeniture of their Father *Iſhmael*. The God of *Jacob*, and not of *Eſau*, to exclude the *Idumeans*, of the race of *Eſau*, who therefore hated the *Iſraelites*, and were always Jealous of them.

Mr. Allix Reflexions ſur le Penſat: part. 2. chap. 15.

Some conformity and agreement in Sacraments among *Chriſtians*, we find by Experience, doth rather produce Jealouſie, than procure love. The differences in other things are therefore thought the more unreaſonable, and hard to be born by the differing parties, and are the more inſiſted on to the exaſperating of one another. Inſtances of the like may be given in the diſcord between the *Iews* and the *Samaritans*. *Epiphanius* takes notice of the *Nazarites*, who acknowledged J. Chriſt, but withal continued the Cuſtoms and Ceremonies of the *Iews*, that ſuch was the hatred of the *Iews* againſt them, that they did ſolemnly curſe 'em three times a day in their Synagogues. The *Turks* have an honourable Eſteem of our Saviour J. Chriſt, which the *Tartars* have not, yet the *latter* imbrace the Chriſtian Faith ſooner than the *Turks*. So for the *Turks* and *Perſians*, tho both are *Mahumetans*, and both Circumciſed, they yet deteſt one another more than they do the *Chriſtians*, and will ſooner permit the Chriſtians to live among them, than tolerate one another.

Epiphanii opera. Tom. 2. lib. 1. Hæres. 29.

2. I would farther obſerve, that the Hatred and Enmity of the *Idumeans* againſt the *Iews*, did on all occaſions diſcover it ſelf, till the time of the *Macchabees*. Not only did they deny them a paſſage thro their Gountry, but they took all opportunities to joyn with their Enemies, to ravage and ſpoil them. When *Nebuchadnezzar* burnt the City and Temple of *Ieruſalem*, the *Edomites* (with others who ſerv'd under him) rejoyc't in its Ruin, and aſſiſted the *Chaldæans*. They cried, *Raze it, Raze it, even to the ground. Pſalm.* 137. v. 7. Following the *Chaldæan* Army like Ravens to feed upon the Carcaſſes, which fell by their Cruelty: & taking the advantage of their miſeries, to be Revenged upon them. For which God threatens to take vengeance on *Edom*. Of this the Church profeſſeth her Confidence, *Pſalm.* 8. *God hath ſpoken in his Holineſs —— over* Edom *will I caſt out my ſhoe*. Tis an Emblem of ſubduing them under his *feet*. *I will*

Numb. 20.

2 *Chron.* 36.

Ezek. 25. 12: 15.

Jer. 49. c. 8.

walk

walk thro, possess, & tread down the land of Edom: which was true when *David put garrisons in Edom, and all they of Edom became his servants.* He penned this Psalm, when his General *Ioab* smote *twelve thousand* Edomites or *Idumeans*, in the Valley of Salt, and *Abishai six thousand*; and therfore called * *Eighteen thousand.* They are called *Syrians* in one place, and *Edomites* in another. 2 *Sam.* 8.14. 1 *Chron.* 18: 12.

During the captivity of the Jews in *Babylon*, 'tis thought the *Idumeans* did invade those parts of *Iudea*, that were next adjoyning to their Country and fixed there, till rooted out by the *Macchabees.* They served the *Israelites* (the Seed of *Iacob*) for about *seven hundred* years: and had no proper *King* of their own, till the time of *Iehoram*, when they cast off the yoke of *Judah.* Every Vice-roy was called a King till that time. So we read, 1 *Kings* 22. 47. *There was no King in Edom, a Deputy was King.* 2 *Kings* 8.20.

It was foretold by old *Isaac*, that the Time should come when *Esau should have the Dominion, & break the Yoke of* Jacob *from off his neck.* This began in *Solomons* time (when he forsook God, and turned to Idolatry) by *Hadad*, who fled to *Ægypt* for shelter, when *Ioabs* Army conquered *Idumea*; afterwards under *Iehoram*, they wholly revolted, and slew their King, who had been subject to *Iehosaphat* the Father of *Iehoram.* For about eight hundred years they continued a free People, till the time of *Johannes Hircanus*, the son of *Simon* the Macchabee, who forced and compelled them to receive Circumcision and the Religious Rites and Ceremonies of the *Jews.* This was one of the first Instances of *Force* used in the matter of Religion, which as it was a symptom of the degenerate State of the *Iewish* Church at that time, so it was attended with the ordinary Consequent of such Compulsion, viz. instead of making the *Idumeans* sincere Professors of the *Iewish* Religion, it did but exasperate them the more against their Religion and Nation. 'Twas an Evidence the Spirit of God had greatly forsaken the *Iews* under the second Temple; and it succeeded accordingly: for the *Pharisees*, who were lately his Favorites, and suggested that Counsel to *Hircanus*; and put him upon it, were the next whom he severely proceeded against; for under the most grievous penalties he forbad (and endeavor'd to abolish) their *Opinions* and *Ordinances*, and within a few years, the very Family of *Hircanus* too, (by contentions and quarrels among themselves) was extinquisht, and by the Gen. 27. c. 40. *Joseph: Antiq.* lib. 8. c. 8. l. 9 c. 2. *Ibid.* lib. 13. c. 17. *Ibid.* lib. 13. c. 18: 19.

righteous Judgment of God, the Government of the *Jews* fell into the hands of the *Idumeans*, when such as *Antipater* and *Herod* ruled over them. After this the Jews were more careful, as well they might, not to make Proselytes to their Religion by fraud or Force, or to admit any but such as offered themselves freely, of their own accord.

From that time the *Idumeans* were comprehended among the *Jews*, and *Idumea* began to be confounded with *Judea*, and reckon'd as a part of *Palestine*. *Balaam's* prophecy had now been fullfilled, *that Edom should be a Possession, and* Seir *a Possession for his Enemies.* 24. *Numb.* 18. They were now reputed as *Jews*, and *Herod*, the son of *Antipater*, of an *Idumean* stock, being the son of Parents who were Proselites, might be called the *Brother* of the *Jews*, and being by profession a *Jew*, and standing in the third Generation, might enter into the Congregation, and be their King. *Herod's* family, of the race of *Edom*, did by leave of the *Romans* reign over the *Jews* for the space of an hundred years, *then had Esau dominion over his Brother Jacob, as foretold Gen.* 27. c. 40. till this time they were separated from the rest of the world, under Governours of their own, who descended from *Iacob*; and this is the time, when the coming of *Shiloh* the *Messiah* drew near. And many do here reckon the Accomplishment of that Prophecy 49. *Gen.* 10. *The Scepter shall not depart from* Judah, *till* Shiloh *come.* But the learned * Mr. *Mede* hath prov'd that *Shilo*, or the Messiah, *was to come, and the gathering of the Nations* (or Gentiles) *unto him*, was to be accomplisht, before the *Scepter* should finally depart from *Judah*, which was not so soon. *Josephus* mentions many instances of the violence of the *Idumeans* against their Brethren in the last Civil Wars of the *Jews*, which issued in the Final Destruction of *Jerusalem*, their Temple, City, and Nation, by the *Romans:* when Wrath came upon them to the uttermost, and the Scepter departed from *Judah*, so that they have continued without King or Prince, or distinct Government of their own, to this very day.

Light-foot, centui: Chorogr. Matth. præm. cap 3

Joseph. de bello Jud. lib. 1. c. 15. Spanhemii dub. Evang. pars. 1. dub. 16. De Herodis M. genere. Casaubon Exercit. 1. ad appar. Baron.

** Medes, diatribe in Gen 49. 10. & Petavii Animadv. ad Hær. 29. Epiphan.*

De bell. Jud. lib. 4. c. 5, 6.

2. It is farther to be observ'd concerning *Edom* or the *Idumeans*, that they being the old Inveterate *Enemy* of *Israel*, all the Adversaries of the Church of God are sometimes expresst by that name. We read 83 *Psalm.* 7, 8. in a short Catalogue of the Enemies of the Church, that *Edom* is set in the head of them.

And

And the *Messiah*, when described as a Conqueror over his Enemies, is said to *come from Edom, with dyed Garments* (or garments stained with Blood) *from Bozra*, the chief City of *Idumea*. As the name of *Israel* is used for the whole Church of God, so the *Edomites* by reason of their ancient Malice, and near Neighborhood, are mention'd by a synecdoche for all other Adversaries. On this account we read of so many Complaints, and prayers, and imprecations of the Prophets against them, and the Destruction * threated by God is answerable, in several places. The *modern* Jews would feign make the † *Christians*, whom they call *Romans*, to be the *Edom*, that shall be destroyed, and the *Roman* Empire they call by the name of the *Edomitical* Empire. The *ancient* Jews by *Edom*, and *the Remnant of Edom*, understood all the rest of Mankind besides themselves, or the *Jewish* Nation, who descended from Jacob. The spiritual victory of the *Messiah* over all Nations is thus described by the Prophet, that his Ministers *shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab. Isai.* 11. c. 14. *Moab* is sometimes taken in this general sense. as *Isai.* 25. c. 10. What we translate *the Remnant*, or Residue, of *Edom*, *Amos.* 9. c. 12. (according to the present reading of the Hebrew Text,) the Apostle *James* more truly renders, *the Residue of men. Acts* 15. c. 16, 17. as Mr. *Mede*, and *Dr. Pocock* observe. 'Tis therefore told, that when the Tabernacle of *David* shall be raised up in Christ, and the Breaches thereof closed, that the *Gentiles* shall be taken in, as well as the *Jews*.

Isa. 63.

* *Ezek.* 25. c. 9. and chap 35. *Jer.* 49. c. 17: 18. *Obad* v. 10. *Amos.* 1, c. 11: 12. *Joel.* 3. c. 19: 20.

† *See Galatin.* de Arcan. lib. 4. c. 28. *Buxtorf* syn: Jud cap. 10. *Schickardi* Jus R. Hebr c. 1. theor. 3.

Mr. Mede's Letter to A. B. Usher. Pocock, Porta Mosis Misc. c. 4. in loc.

I now proceed from this Historical Account of the *Idumeans*. to consider what is here said of them, or what is contained in this *Burden of Dumah*. *He calleth to me out of Seir, saying, Watchman, what of the night?* &c. The Prophet is commanded by God, in his vision, to set a Watchman in a Watch-tower, who having related what he had seen concerning old *Babylon*, doth now declare what he had heard concerning *Dumah*, or *Idumea*: that he heard one call to him out of *Seir*, saying, *Watchman, what of the night?* for the better explication of this Question, and the Answer to it, in the following words, the Original Text (as is * necessary in other places) must be *paraphrased*, because the sense will not otherwise be entire and full, by a *literal* Translation into any other Language.

v. 6.

* *See Sentiments de Qu: Theol. sur l'Hist. Crit.* lett. 15.

One calling to the Watchman out of *Seir*, represents the temper of

of all the rest; who were ready to ask the same question, having the same Apprehensions of things, and as desirous to be inform'd. And this being represented in a *Vision*, the metaphorical sense of *Night* is principally to be considered, signifying a dark season of Calamity, Fear and Terror, as the morning light is frequently expressive of Joy and Comfort.

The *Question* may be considered in *a double sense*, according to the *Principle*, from whence we may suppose it did proceed: either 1. In *Raillery*, as the effect of a scoffing humour, that argued the greatness of their Confidence and security; whereupon they derided the Prophet, and made a mock of the Judgments he denounced, and threatned. Or 2. *As a serious Enquiry*, from the real Danger of their case, and correspondent Fears, and apprehensions of it.

1. In *Raillery*, and so the question is supposed to be put by the *Edomites* to *Isaiah*, or some other Prophet of the *Jews*, who had denounced Judgment on *Edom*. (If it be to one of their own Watchmen, that had done the like, it will differ very little.) *Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?* the doubling of the Expression implies the greater Derision and scorn, „*i. e.* You profess to be commission'd by God to fore-„see evils to come, and to give warning of approaching Cala-„mity; you have often threatned us with desolating Judgments, „and told us they were near at hand, even at the door; but where „is that *Night* of darkness, and distress you would have frightned „us with? whence is it, that we have not long ago been de-„stroyed, as you told us we should be? We see nothing of the „denounced Tribulation and Misery; we feel nothing of all those „dismal Things you prophecied should come to pass. Our „Sun is not yet set: no, we have a Bright and a Prosperous *Day*; „and have had so ever since we cast off the Yoke of *Judah*. Or „thus. *Watchman, what of the Night?* What Tidings of Judg-„ment do you farther bring us? You have said, it did hang over „our heads; Is it now any *nearer* than formerly? What is be-„come of all your sad story of an approaching Night? Where „are all the Terrible things you were wont to presage? *Watchman,* „*what of the Night?* you pretend to be *a Man of God*, who know „the times and the seasons, and are favor'd with Visions and „Revelations of things to come; what further Evils do you threa-

2 Kings 8. 10.

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„ten us with? what is the *next* Miſchief and Calamity, we „are to expect? What are we now to look for? Can you tell „us any thing more? or is there any thing like to be true, of „all that which you have already told us? We have Liberty, „Peace, and Plenty for the preſent, and will not be afraid of any „tragical Story you can threaten for the future.

To this there is a modeſt and ſerious Anſwer in the following words; *The Watchman ſaid, The Morning cometh, and alſo the Night. i. e.* „Tho now you Rejoyce in Proſperity, think „your ſelves Happy for the preſent, and are confident and ſe„cure, with reſpect to the future; as men after a dark and te„dious Night, rejoyce in the light of the Sun; yet your Coun„try ſhall be made deſolate; Tribulation and diſtreſs ſhall as „certainly overtake you, as the *Morning* will be ſucceeded by „the *Evening*, or the *Day* by the *Night*. And ſuch a *Night* „it ſhall be, as no morning of Deliverance ſhall follow after it. „1 *Mal.* 2, 3. Therefore *if you will Enquire, Enquire; Return,* „*Come: i. e.* if you would know the mind of God, ask ſe„rioufly about it, and not in an Ironical and ſcornful manner: if „you would before it be too late underſtand your Danger, and „prevent it; you ought without delay to conſider your caſe, „and Enquire *in good Earneſt* what is to be done: and with that „Temper and Reſolution, you may *return*, and *come* again, and „*Enquire* farther. Or

2. Suppoſe the Queſtion to be *Serious*, from Fear and Terror, on the account of real and apprehended Danger; the *Edomites* are then repreſented, as ſetting a Watchman in an high Tower, to obſerve the motions of an Enemy; & by reaſon of their Fears, they call often to him, to know what he diſcovereth. „*Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?* „*i. e.* Hath the Enemy attempted any thing farther? doth he „approach nearer? in what a poſture doth he ſeem to be? are „we in any better, or in a worſe Condition than before? „What Time of the Night is it? Is the Morning at hand? When „ſhall theſe Clouds be blown over? this night be ended? Is „there no proſpect, no approach of Deliverance? ſhall we „alway be thus in Fear and Terror? To this the Anſwer is very ſerious and proper, *The Watchman ſaid, the Morning cometh, and alſo the Night. i. e.* „You think at the approach

„ of this morning that your Fears will be ſcattered, and the „ grounds of them removed, and your danger be altogether „ paſt, and therfore wiſh for the *Morning*, and would fain be „ inform'd how near it is: But you deceive your ſelves if you „ think your Calamity will be of ſo ſhort a Continuance, as only „ for one day: for after the break of day hath put an end to *this* „ *Night*, you muſt expect another. If you are not pillag'd, and „ deſtroyed, and made Deſolate, by this attempt of the Enemy, „ during the preſent Night, another will quickly come, and „ your Danger will not be leſs after the preſent cloud is diſperſt. The „ *Morning* may come, as to a deliverance from preſent fears, but „ *the Night will* alſo come: tho you get out of *one* Trouble, you „ will be involved in another; and you will need to *Enquire* „ again, be as much at a loſs as now, and as ſolicitous to be „ inform'd of your danger, and to prevent it. Therefore, *if* „ *you will Enquire*, *Enquire*, and *Tarry here with me* (ſo the *Sep-* „ *tuagint* expreſs it,) *or abide near me*, and you ſhall know what „ I can tell you. Or thus, *If you will Enquire*, *Enquire*; *i. e.* „ you may go, and come, and ask again, one Morning after „ another, and one Night after another; as far as I can diſcern, „ your Danger is not paſt, or like to be. If therefore you will „ *Enquire*, do ſo, go and *Return* again, and *come* for Informa- „ tion another time; as far as I perceive, there will be need of „ further Inquiries. Your *Fears*, as to the grounds of them, „ may juſtly Continue: at leaſt, I ſee nothing for my part to the „ Contrary: if *you* can ſee any thing that hath a better and more „ favorable Aſpect, we would be glad to hear it; *Return*, and „ *come*, and tell us. But the moſt take theſe laſt words, as an „ Exhortation to *Repentance*. *If you will Enquire*, make ſuch an „ Enquiry as may be of ſome uſe and advantage. Not only to „ ſatisfie your Curioſity by the knowledg of your Danger, but „ ſuch as may aſſiſt you to eſcape it. Let me adviſe you to *ſuch* „ *an Enquiry*, as may do you real ſervice. Such queſtions as you „ put will ſignifie little, if not in order to ſomewhat farther. „ The great Queſtion ſhould be, How to appeaſe the diſpleaſure „ of God, and turn away his Wrath; or how to meet him in „ the way of his Judgments. Therefore *Return* to God by *Re-* „ *pentance*, and *Come*, and joyn your ſelves with his People. „ (*Tarry with me*, *or near me*) and try what may be done by Pray-

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„er and Supplication, with Repentance and Amendment, to „divert the Effects of his Anger, ſo that the threatned ſtorm may „paſs away, and this feared approaching *Night* may not overtake „you.

This Burden of *Dumah* being thus Paraphras'd, and explain'd, let me conſider, 1. From the *Title* of this Prophecy, *The Burden of Dumah*, in what reſpects the threatned Judgments of God (Temporal and Eternal) do anſwer that name of a *Burden*. 2. From the Queſtion, *Watchman, what of the Night?* as in Raillery and Deriſion of the Prophet, conſider the ſin, and folly, the miſchief and danger of *Mocking* at the threatned Judgments of God. 3. From the *Succeſſion* of the *Night* to the *Day*, in a Metaphorical ſenſe, *the Morning cometh, and alſo the Night*; Conſider how a Time of Darkneſs and Diſtreſs, a ſeaſon of Calamity and Trouble doth ſucceed, and follow the Peace and Proſperity of the wicked, both as to particular Perſons, and Nations. 4. From this *Queſtion* of the *Edomites*, as *a ſerious Enquiry* (by thoſe who apprehended themſelves and their Country in more than ordinary danger) and the *Anſwer* to it, as Containing proper counſel to prevent a threatned Calamity, I ſhall conſider them both with Relation to *Engliſh Proteſtants*. 1. That we may take notice, what time of the Night it is with us: or what *ſigns of the Times* may be reflected on, as to the approach of *a Darker Night*, if not ſpeedily prevented. 2. Upon ſuch an Enquiry, what *Returning* is our Duty, to divert the Anger of God; What may and ought to be done, to lengthen out our Day of Peace, and render the Light, which yet ſhines, more ſteady and glorious, as well as laſting.

1. Let us conſider the *Title* of this Prophecy, *The Burden of Dumah*. The word [*Maſſa*] ſignifies in general any thing that is carried or deliver'd from one to another; and ſo ſtrictly imports no more than a *Meſſage*, or prediction from God, concerning any perſon, or people. It is not alway taken in an ill ſenſe, being preſixt to the promiſe of Bleſſings, *Zech.* 12. c. 1. as well as to the threatning of Judgments. But becauſe the *Jews* derided the Meſſage of the Prophets, and retorted theſe very words upon them, *The Burden of the Lord*, in contempt and ſcorn; God ſeverely reproves and threatens them for it, *Jer.* 23. c. 34, 38. *I will punish that man and his houſe, that ſhall thus ſay, the bur-*

Dr. *Pocock*, comment on *Mal.* 1. c. 1.

den of the Lord, Every man's mouth shall be his Burden. Ye have therein perverted the words of the living God: therefore ye shall rather say, what hath the Lord answered, or what hath he spoken. However, since the Predictions and Menaces of Calamity against a People, are so frequently mention'd under this name, and the Execution of them have the same appellative, (*Every man shall bear his own burden, i. e.* suffer the punishment due to his sin,) we may therefore consider the *Threatnings of Judgment*, as very fitly stiled by this name of a *Burden*, with relation, 1. to *God*, who threatens and inflicts Judgment. 2. To his *Prophets*, and *Ministers*, who in his Name denounce, and declare his threatned Wrath. 3. To the *People*, against whom these Judgments are threatned, and upon whom they are Executed.

Gal. 6. 5.

1. To *God* himself. The Judgments which he threatens and inflicts may be term'd *Burdens*, because *he doth not Afflict willingly, or grieve the Children of men*, much less destroy them.

Lament. 3. 33.

Judgment is his *strange work*, and *he cometh out of his Place*, when he cometh to make desolate. He waits long, and calls often and loud, he gives frequent warning, and doth not execute Judgment hastily, and in a Passion; And when the Honour of his Name makes Punishment necessary, yet how loath and unwilling doth he seem to be! How backward and Averse to such a work! *How shall I give thee up*, Ephraim! *How shall I deliver thee, O Israel! How shall I make thee as* Admah! *How shall I set thee as* Zeboim! *my Heart is turned within me, my Repentings are kindled together*, &c. *i. e.* „Tho thou deservest to be forsaken by „my Mercy, which thou hast abused, and seized by my Justice, „which thou hast provok't; yet how shall I find in my Heart to „permit it? tho I can hardly tell how to bear with thee any longer, or without the dishonour of my Government, delay the „Execution of my threatned Anger, yet *Oh Ephraim, my dear „son*! How shall I give thee up? O *Israel!* the Posterity of my „ancient Friend *Jacob*, how shall I deliver thee over to final „ruin, and (as *Admah* and *Zeboim*, that were destroyed with *So-*„*dom* and *Gomorrah*?) *My Heart is turned within me.* I find „such strugglings of kindness in my Heart towards thee, that „I know not how to forsake thee: when it comes to the Exe-„cution, my Bowels are moved, my affections stirr'd, and I „know

Hos. 11. 8, 9.

Jude v. 7. Deut. 29. 22, 23.

„know not how to do it. *My Repentings are kindled together*; all „the thoughts and arguments that might perswade me to repent „of my threatned Judgments, are all muster'd together to dissuade „me, so that I begin to Repent of the Evils I have threatned. „*I will not Execute the fierceneß of mine Anger*, and make a full „end of thee. The like in other Places: O *Israel!* what shall I do unto Thee? *O Judah! what shall I do unto thee? Oh! that there were such an Heart in them? Oh that they knew the things of their Peace!* How long doth he wait on a sinful Nation! how earnestly doth he summon them to Repentance! sometimes by the voice of his Prophets; *Woing* them by his prophets, who have the Sword of his mouth, 6. *Hos.* 5. That they may not be cut off by the sword of Judgment. And sometimes in the threatning of Judgment, he *roars like a Lion*, that he may not devour, and tear in pieces. By lesser strokes of Judgment, he sometimes gives warning to prevent greater. He first makes use of a *pruning Hook*, before he takes the *Ax* in hand; he speaks once, yea twice, and a third time, doubling and trebling his calls to Repentance, by the Voice of his Rod, before he gives over a people called by his Name. He shoots his arrows of lesser Judgments, as *Jonathan* did his to *David*, with Letters round about them; not utterly to destroy, but mercifully to instruct. He is first as *a Moth to Israel, and as rottenneß to Judah*, before he comes like *a Lion*, and *a Bear*, to destroy. The Impenitent *Jews* had lesser Judgments, *the beginning of sorrows*, before Wrath came upon them to the uttermost. We read of *Golden Vials full of the wrath of God*, 15. *Rev.* 7. *Golden Vials*, because the death of men is precious, and God delights not in it: and *Vials*, such vessels as no great Evils can come out of at once; coming out thro a narrow neck, they hinder one another, and cannot come out but by degrees; unless we break the Vials in pieces by bolder provocations, and hasten destructive Judgments on our selves. Nay, he doth not presently destroy, tho his *warnings* be slighted; but *all the day long*, he is said *to spread out his hands to a stiff-necked and rebellious People*; thô he might have consum'd them in the morning, or at noon. He sets many Beacons on fire, shoots off many a warning piece, and gives many an Alarm to awaken us to Repentance. He first *whets his sword*, and *bends his bow*, and *makes ready his arrows*. He was but *six* days

Hos. 6. c. 4. Isai. 5. c. 4. Mic. 5. c. 3, 4, 5.

1 Sam. 20. c.

Hos. 5. 2, 12, 15.

Psalm 7. 12.

in making the World, but was *seven days* in deſtroying one little City, as *Chryſoſtom* obſerves concerning *Jericho*. He departs gradually, as if he were loath to be gone. He gives orders for their deſtruction, and then recals the Warrant, and tries one year longer. When Juſtice renews her plea, Mercy interpoſeth to beg a reprieve, and pardon. On this account God permitted *Abraham* to plead with him ſo long on the behalf of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and the other Cities of the Plain; If there be but *Fifty*, if there be but *Forty*, if there be but *Thirty*, but *Twenty*, but *Ten Righteous Perſons*, for whoſe ſake he ſhould ſpare them, it ſhould be done. God was willing to hear the utmoſt which *Abraham* could urge, to prevent their deſtruction: as if he had told him, that he would have been glad to meet with an Argument, that might diſſwade him from ſo unpleaſing a work. He grants him ſo often, till the Patriarch was aſhamed to ask further. So unwilling was God to deſtroy; ſuch a *Burden* is the inflicting of Judgment, even to *God* himſelf.

Josh. 6.

Gen. 18. c. 23.

2. 'Tis a *Burden* to the *Prophets* and *Miniſters*, who are imployed to denounce and declare the Judgments of God. How doth the Prophet *Iſaiah* expreſs his Affection in ſuch a caſe, when he was to threaten Judgment in the name of the Lord, and foreſaw the Execution of it, 22 *Chap.* 4, 5. *Look away from me, I will be bitter in weeping; labour not to comfort me, becauſe of the ſpoiling of the Daughter of my people. For it is a day of Trouble, and of treading down, and of Perplexity by the Lord God of Hoſts, in the valley of Viſion.* So the Prophet *Jeremy*, 4. c. 19. *My Bowels, my Bowels, I am pained at my very heart; my Heart maketh a noiſe in me, I cannot hold my Peace, becauſe thou haſt heard, O my ſoul, the ſound of the Trompet, the alarm of War.* By the ſpirit of Prophecy he knew it was at hand, and as certain, as if he had already heard it. And when the *Jews* ſcoffed at the word of the Lord, and dar'd his vengeance, ſaying, *let it come*, 17. c. 15. How doth he appeal to God, v. 16. *As for me, I have not haſtned from being a Paſtor to follow thee:* (*i. e.* as I did not on my own head, without thy call, ſeek the Office of a Prophet to this people, ſo being called, I did not decline to follow thee) *neither have I deſired the woful day, thou knoweſt: that which came out of my Lips was right before thee.*

thee. i. e. I was loath to be a Meſſenger of ſuch ſad Tidings, but I have done it in obedience to thee, Lord, thou knoweſt.

So for *Spiritual* and *Eternal Judgments*, threatned by the *Miniſters* of Chriſt to the Impenitent; Tis a *Burden* to their ſouls to conſider the Folly, and fore-ſee the Miſery of hardned, deluded ſinners, and declare the woes and curſes in the book of God againſt them.

But tho *we tell you weeping*, as the Apoſtle, 3 *Phil.* 18. we muſt declare, that *their End will be Deſtruction*, who are Enemies to the Croſs of Chriſt by wicked works. You force us to ſpeak terribly, in the name of the Lord. We had rather be Ambaſſadors of Peace, than Heralds of War: We would feign be every one a *Barnabas*, Sons of Conſolation; but in faithfulneſs to our truſt from God, and to the ſouls of men, we muſt frequently be *Boanerges's*, Sons of Thunder: We would rather bring nothing but glad-tidings of Joy, but 'tis part of our Commiſſion to publiſh the *Severity*, as well as the *Mercy* of God; and *knowing the Terrors of the Lord*, do endeavor to perſwade men, by that which may work upon their *Fears*, as well as their *Hopes*. 2 *Corin* 5. 11. We would rather be like *Doves*, to bring an *Olive branch* in our mouths, as a ſymbol of Peace and Reconciliation, than like *Ravens*, to preſage Death, croak Funerals, and foretel deſtruction; but Neceſſity is laid upon us, to declare the *whole Counſel* of God; not only, that *whoſoever believes and obeys the Goſpel ſhall be ſaved*; but that *he who doth not, ſhall be damned, he is condemn'd already, and the wrath of God abideth on him*; that there is no *eſcaping, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation: and except you Repent, you ſhall perish.* *John* 3. 6. 16, 18. *Hebr.* 10. 6. 26, 31. *Luke* 13. 6. 3.

3. *A Burden to the People*, and Perſons, againſt whom *Judgment* is either *threatned*, or *inflicted*. Moſt men would have us Prophecy nothing but ſmooth and pleaſant things, and care not to hear of the Terrors of the Lord, of the certain and intolerable Damnation of the Wicked, who will not turn and live. This is *legal* preaching, ſaith one; this will fright men out of their wits, ſaith another; theſe are *hard ſayings*, who can bear 'em; this is the way to make men run diſtracted, and to drive them to *Diſpair*; and if all this be true, *who ſhall, who can be ſaved?* Therefore many think, and ſome ſay, of the moſt Faithful Miniſters of Chriſt, what the Prieſt of *Bethel* ſaid to

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Amos 9 c. 10. *Ieroboam* concerning *Amos*, *The land is not able to bear his words.* According to the prediction, that in the latter days, *men shall not endure sound (and searching) Doctrine.* On this account the *men of the Earth*, or Carnal, sensual men, are said to *Rejoyce* at the silencing and

2 Tim. 4. c. 3

Rev. 11. c. 10. slaying of the *Witnesses*, because *they tormented them with their Words.* But if the threatning, and Denunciation of divine Judgments be so burdensom, what will the Execution of them be? If the roaring of the Lion be so dreadful, what will it be, when he shall devour and tear in pieces? If the menacing *Voice* of God by his Messengers be so heavy, (when he is said to *Hew* men by his Prophets,) how much heavier will his *Hand* be in the inflicting Judgment? If the message of the Word be insupportable, which tells you, *you must Turn or Dye*, *Repent or Perish*; if that flash Hell fire in your faces, and you cannot bear it; how much less will you be able to bear the Wrath of God, as a Consuming Fire, when he shall make good his word, and

Jer. 17. c. 15. Amos, 5. c. 18. Isai. 5. c. 19. fulfil his threatnings? They therefore who say, *where is the word of the Lord? let it come*; *who desire the day of the Lord, and say, let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it*; *and let his Counsel draw nigh, that we may know it*; they know not what they say; for *the day of the Lord is Darkness, and not Light.* They know not what they wish; for all his threatnings will prove Terrible *Burdens* when ever they are executed, however now they be despised, and made light of. Which brings me to the *Second* thing propos'd, viz.

2. From the Question, *Watchman; what of the Night?* as in Raillery and derision of the Prophet, to consider *the Sin, and Folly, and Danger of mocking at the threatned Judgments of God, whether temporal, or Eternal.* I mention both, because the same Principle of Infidelity is the source of both: and that I may render this discourse the more useful to every Reader, let us consider.

1. The *Sin* of Scoffing. The Devil hath tried without success, by the Rage of Persecutors, and by the subtilty of Deceivers and false Teachers, to destroy Religion, and banish the Fear of God out of the world: but of late he hath attempted the same thing by Atheists and Sadduces, and Epicurean Deists, endeavoring by drollery, and Buffoonry to expose the Mysteries of Religion to contempt, and render them ridiculous; deriding the

the Threatnings and Fears of divine Judgment as a groundless Bugbear, as only the trade of Ministers, and the trick of States Men. Such *Scoffers*, 'tis foretold, should arise *in the Latter days*, *walking after their own lusts.* In other sins men do not so directly strike at God, but seek the Satisfaction of some lust or appetite; but in this scoffing humour there is an immediate Affront to God, a downright Contempt of him, and opposition to him: whereas the very Devils own his Being, and tremble at his Power and Vengeance. Jude v. 18.

2. However they may set up for *Wits*, and think themselves considerable, assoon as they are Impudent enough to break a Jest upon the H. Scriptures, and deride Religion, yet *this their way is their Folly.* Not only as against all the rules of good Manners, to make a mock of that, which the greatest part of their Neighbors and Acquaintance do reverence, and reckon sacred; but as they employ their Understanding, Fancy, and Wit against the God who gave them Reason, and a Capacity for Religion, to distinguish them from Brutes: and as in defiance to all reason, they contradict the faith of all History, and the Experience of all Ages; and run against the setled Judgment and Testimony of all wise and sober men, who have inquir'd into these things: yea some of them against their own Convictions and Experience, which they have drown'd by sensuality, and made a shift to forget: but the Folly of it will be more apparent, if we consider,

3. The *Danger* of it: for if there be a *God*, an infinitely Holy, Almighty, and Righteous God, and the Scriptures be his word, they pull down vengeance on their own heads, laugh themselves into Misery and Ruin, and shall dearly pay for their scoffing Humour: let them read 28 *Isai.* 14, 15, 18. and tremble.

'Tis seldom they escape the Righteous Judgment of God in this world; Yea the places where such infect the Air, and the Societies to which they are related, do fare the worse for them. 2 *Chron.* 36. c. 15, 16. *They mocked the Messengers of God, and despised his word, 'till the wrath of God rose against his People, and there was no Remedy.* But if in this world they escape, the day is hastning, (and oh how certain, and how near is that day!) when *God will speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.* And when Death and Judgment are in view, will

they then ſtand to what now they ſcornfully utter in their drunken Mirth? Will you *then* maintain your Slanders? and juſtifie your contempt of God, and his threatned Judgments? will you *then* avouch it as your ſetled opinion, when you are to leave this world? Alas! while you are ſcorning the Judgment of God, and by foolish Jeſts, and Raillery, make a mock of Sin; how many Thouſands are ſuffering under endleſs Deſpair, that threatned ſeverity of God, which you deſpiſe, and ſome of them too did once deride! Will the Holy God, think you, be afraid to fulfil his word, becauſe you make light of it? Will he not laugh at your Calamity, and mock when your Fear cometh? That day is haſtening; for as the *Morning* cometh, ſo alſo the *Night*, which is next to be conſidered.

Prov. 1. c. 25, 26.

3. From the *Succeſſion* of the *Night* to the *Day*, that *a Time of Darkneſs and Diſtreſs, a ſeaſon of Calamity and Trouble, ſhall ſucceed and follow the Preſent Proſperity and Peace of the wicked.*

This will appear to be true, both as to particular Perſons, and Nations. 1. *Particular Perſons* have their *Morning*, their time of Light, and a Day of Gods Patience, to which a *Night* of Darkneſs and Affliction ſucceeds. Let us not be confident and Secure in the midſt of Plenty, Health, and Peace, while the light of God ſhines upon our Tabernacle, and the Evil day ſeems afar off; becauſe Clouds and Darkneſs, Storms and a Tempeſt may overtake us, ere we are aware; and tho they ſhould not, yet the Night will quickly come. And oftentimes when we are moſt ſecure and confident, and pleaſe our ſelves with dreams of a long Continuance of Earthly Bleſſings, ſome great Diſaſter and Calamity, ſome ſurprizing Stroke of Judgment doth ſeiſe us on a ſudden, when we leaſt expect it: The tables may be turned, the ſcene alter, and our Light go out in darkneſs. Let us therefore uſe this World as not abuſing it, knowing that the *Faſhion of the World paſſeth away.* 'Tis certain, the cleareſt and moſt proſperous and brighteſt Day of the Wicked, will be followed by an Everlaſting Night. Yet a little while, and their Sun will ſet, and groſs *Darkneſs*, that may be felt, *Outer*, and *Eternal* Darkneſs, be the Portion of their Cup. If we believe and foreſee it, let us not envy their preſent *Sun-ſhine*; for after they have warm'd themſelves a while, with the ſparks of their own kindling, they ſhall lie down in Sorrow. 2. 'Tis true of *Nations* and

and *Countries*, they have their *Morning*, and a *day* of Peace, which is succeeded by a *Night* of Judgment and publick Calamity. Thô God had favor'd the *Jews* above all other People, and by a Covenant of Peculiarity they were his Portion and Inheritance; yet there was a Time when it might be said by the Daughters of *Sion*, in the valley of vision, *Wo be unto us, for the day goeth away, and the shadows of the Evening are stretched out.* Their day had many a dark cloud, and violent Storms, when their Country was made Desolate, and their people carried Captive: and at last Destruction by the *Romans* put an end to the day of their Peace. And tho more than *sixteen hundred* years are past, their *Night* is not yet ended. The like is fore-told should happen to the Enemies of the Church. *All mine Enemies*, saith she, *have heard of my Trouble; they are glad that thou hast done it: but thou wilt bring on them the Day* of Calamity, *that thou hast proclaimed, & they shall be like unto me.* They shall have their time of darkness and distress, as I have mine. There is *an hour of Temptation* for *Nations*, as well as particular Persons. 'Tis true, God waits long, and gives frequent warning before he doth execute vengeance on a Wicked People; but when they have filled up the measure of their sins, all their Priviledges and prayers shall not save them. Tho *Noah*, *Job*, and *Daniel* should intercede for them, he will not be intreated. Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear them, *he will even hide his face from them at that time*, as they have behaved themselves evil in their doings: And all their Auxiliaries and Succors, all their Friends, Confederates, and Allies shall prove a *vain* Refuge. Now that we may know how far we and our Brethren are concerned in this, and what use we ought to make of such a Reflection, let us

Jer. 6 4.

Lam. 1. 21.

Luke 8. 13. 21 Chap. 22.

Mic. 3. 4. 1 c. 14.

4. Consider this *Question* in the Text, as *a Serious Enquiry*, by those who apprehended themselves, and their Country, in a more than ordinary Danger, and the *Answer* to it, as containing proper Counsel and Advice to prevent a threatned storm, that we may be informed, 1. What time of the *Night* it is with us, and reflect upon the signs of *a Darker Night* approaching, at least enquire, whether the state of our Case be not such as may cause us to apprehend and fear it. 2. Upon such an Enquiry, consider what *Returning* to God by Repentance, and to love and unity with one Another, is our *present Duty*, that if it be not too late

late, we may yet prevent it. That there are *some* Signs of the Times that we not only may, but *ought* to obſerve, cannot be denied; becauſe ſome are *operative* and *Moral*, which have an active influence on the dismal Events they preſignifie: There are others which are only *Indicative*; and concerning them 'tis more difficult certainly to determin or to make a Judgment by 'em. Altho I am far from preſcribing limits to the Long-ſuffering of God, or pretending to tell, when his Patience will Expire, and bear no longer with the Provocations of *English Proteſtants*; yet, to reflect on the Moral Prognoſtications, and propable fore-runners of National Calamity, can neither be preſumptuous or impertinent, but a ſeaſonable duty; becauſe 'tis by a ſerious obſervation of ſuch things, that God awakens his People to betake themſelves to their *Hiding place*, in obedience to that Call, 26 *Iſai.* 20, 21. *Come my People, enter thou into thy Chambers, and ſhut thy doors about thee: hide thy ſelf as it were for a little moment, until the Indignation be over paſt; for behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the Inhabitants of the Earth for their Iniquities.* Such things *the wicked, who continue to do wickedly, ſhall not underſtand; but the wiſe ſhall underſtand.* 12 *Dan.* 4, 10. And the neglect of obſerving theſe things, is the ſubject of a divine Complaint and Threatning: that the *ſtork*, and the *Crane*, and the *Swallow* ſhould know their time; but *my People*, ſaith God, *know not the Judgment of the Lord. i. e.* They will not obſerve, they do not take notice of what I have done, or am about to do in the Earth.

Jer. 8. 7. *Pſalm* 28. 5.

That the night is not paſt, with reſpect to the *Reformed Churches*, but further Darkneſs to be expected, may be argued in the general, from the flouriſhing of that *Antichriſtian Kingdom*, and Intereſt, whoſe Deſtruction God hath promis'd, and we expect. And who can imagin, that ſuch great things, as God hath foretold, concerning the final Ruin of *Babylon*, ſhould ever be effected without great Commotions? The laſt ſtrugglings of *Antichriſt* to ſupport the throne of the Beaſt, we may preſume, will be the fierceſt. We read of an *Earthquake* to precede the Raiſing of the Witneſſes, *Rev.* 11. 13. and of *another* great *Earthquake*, at the Fall of *Babylon*. 16 *ch.* 18. Bleſſed is he, who ſhall be counted worthy to eſcape the things coming on the Earth, and to ſtand before the Son of Man.

There-

Therefore *he that hath Ears to hear, let him hear*, not only what the spirit saith to the Churches, but what the Providence of God speaks to the Professors of the Reformed Religion, in *Great Brittain*, *Ireland*, and *Holland*. He calls loudly to us, by the *Bonds*, by the *Banishment*, by the *Blood* of our Brethren in other places; (which will be found in the skirts of *Babylon*;) by a Voice out of *Hungary*, a Voice out of *France*, a Voice out of *Savoy*, and *Piedmont*, to consider our Ways, and turn to the Lord; and not to think or say, that *they were Greater Sinners than we*; but enquire, whether the cup of Trembling be not like to go round, *Except we Repent*. Some of the grounds of our *Fears*, with reference to an Approaching Night, I shall now mention.

1. Tho in the *Evening* time it may be *Light*, yet *the diminution of Heat*, by the declining Sun, betokens *Night* to be at hand. Such is the increase of Knowledg among *Protestants*, (and Blessed be God, the Light is much greater than formerly) that some are ready to conclude on that account, that we have nothing to apprehend or fear. But we have no such reason to be Confident, considering the prevalency and spreading of many pernitious *Errors* against the Mysteries of Faith; that a Flood of these is of late come out of the Mouth of the old serpent. If withal we consider the Prejudices and obstinacy of the most for the Opinions they have blindly receiv'd, against the Evidence and Conviction of farther Light. And the miserable neglect of *Catechising* younger persons, in private and in publick, to the shame of *English Protestants* in comparison with the *Dutch*, or *French*: so that multitudes have a *Zeal* for the Reformed Religion, but not *according to Knowledg*; and by ignorance of the grounds and Principles of Faith and Practice, are prepared for Apostacy: and of those who know the *Truth*, the greatest part hold it in *Unrighteousness*; the Light shines in darkness, and they have not *received the Truth in the Love of it*. However, granting that there is *more light* than formerly; may it not be the last blaze of the Candle of the Lord, gasping as it were a little flash of Light, before it be quite Extinct, and the Candlestick remov'd? Because the Light of Truth is accompanied with little *warmth* of Devotion, little love to God, and fervor in his Service. A spirit of Lukewarmness, Indifference, and

Formality hath overspread all Churches, and all Places. And who almost is free from the Common Contagion? When the Generality of *Protestants* grow Loose and Vain, Covetous and Worldly, Proud and Sensual, in any particular Country, may we not fear that God will *spue them out of his Mouth*? when they have lost their *First Love*, that he will *come quickly* to the like severity against them, as against the Church of *Ephesus*?

Rev. 2. 4, 5.

God departs *by degrees* from a People, as he doth from *Particular Persons*. First he is cast out of the *Heart*, then out of the *Closet*, secret Devotion is neglected; then out of the *Family*, he is not invok't and called upon there; then out of the *Congregation*, publick Ordinances are laid aside as useless; and at last they are given up to a spirit of *Prophaneness* and *Irreligion*. Any of those degrees have a threatning aspect as to a further progress. The Tree is first *Barren*, and brings forth no *Fruit*, then no *Leaves*, then no *Bark*, and so is fit for the *Ax*, and to be cast into the Fire. So a *gradual* Departure of the Presence of God from his *Temple* (as represented in the Prophet's vision by five several removes) threatens further and final forsaking. For as it was not the *Ark* of God *alone*, with the Mercy-seat covered with Cherubims, but the *Answers* given immediately by God in the Holy Place, that were the undoubted evidences of the Presence of his *Glory* with *Israel*; so it is not the Doctrine of the Gospel alone, and the publick Ministry of it, in our days; but the Powerful Operations of the Spirit by the Gospel on the Consciences and Lives of men, that is the cleerest demonstration of his Gracious Presence. 'Tis true, there is much *Light* by Preaching, but few hard Hearts are melted and softned, few blind Eyes open'd; *comparatively* but a few in most places. The Word is a dead Letter for the most part, preacht and heard without the Life, and Heat, and Power of the Quickning Spirit. Thus it was with the *Jews* before the *Babylonish Captivity*; and so in our B. Saviour's time before their final Ruin.

Ezek. 9.

Isai. 6. 9, 10, 11.
John 12. 40.

2. When *Drowsiness*, a spirit of *slumber* and security, doth generally obtain; not only among the *Foolish Virgins*, but even those who would be accounted *Wise*: When *Christians* are more careless and confident than ordinary, setled on their lees, little concern'd for any thing but their own Repose, and loath to be

be stirred up, and kept from sleeping. 'Tis an ill sign, when tho their Neighbours House be on Fire, they are no more affected with it, than men fast asleep on their beds; such a spiritual Judgment doth commonly end in Temporal Plagues: that they who are not sensible of the one, may be made to feel the other. For such a provocation, God commands the Prophet, *to set the Trumpet to his mouth*, and proclaim war against *Israel*. Hos. 8. 1. Especially when former warnings have been slighted, preceding Judgments disregarded, the word of God despised, his Messengers mockt, and his Ministers silenc'd; in such a case we read, that *his wrath arose against them*, and *there was no Remedy*. For this God threatned, *to search Jerusalem with Candles, and punish the men setled on their lees: who say in their Hearts, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do Evil.* The Security of *Particular Persons* is a presage of their Ruin; when the slothful and wicked servant thinks his Lord doth delay his coming, he will come, and cut him asunder *in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of*: when *Agag* said, *the Bitterness of death is past*, he was nearest Execution. When the Rich Fool in the Parable, said, *Soul take thine ease*; the next news we hear of him, is that the Pillow is pluckt from under his Head, and he is cast into Hell. So for *Nations*, in the Instances of the *old world*, of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, the People of the *Jews*, and the *Romish Babylon*, whose Plagues shall come *suddenly* upon her, as *in one day*, when she sits as a *Queen*, and thinks she shall see no Evil.

2 Chron. 36. 16. Isai. 30. 8. 9, 12, 13. Zach. 1, 12. Math. 24. 50. Rev. 18. 7, 8.

3. The night is a Time of *Solitariness*; men don't meet together in such Companies by night as by Day. In the Evening every one seeks a Shelter, and an Hiding-place for himself to rest in. Thus a selfish, narrow, dividing spirit generally obtaining among any People, is an ill sign that a Night of Calamity is at hand: When *all mind their own things*, and *few* or none *the things of Christ*, or of their common Peace. And here the want of *Concord* and *Union* among *Protestants*, Divisions, and Separations, and the sinful causes of 'em, ought to be considered; especially when they arise to that degree, that tho the *Common Interest* be at stake, men will not, so far as in them lies, unite together to preserve and defend it. I shall speak of this more largely in the conclusion of this Discourse.

Phil. 2. 4, 21.

4. An-

4. Another sign of an approaching Night, is when God calls home his *Labourers* from their work, and his *Children* to their bed of Rest. When his *Remembrancers* in *Sion*, who should stand in the breach, to turn away Wrath; they who are the *Root* and *the substance in the midst of a Land*, who are the *Stay*, and the *Staff*, the *Chariots* and the *Horsemen* of *Israel*, are called away in great numbers. One *Elisha* by his Interest with God, and the prevalency of his Prayers, was a better defence to *Israel* than Chariots and Horses, and all their warlike Preparations. The loss of such is the weakning of a Country, because they can do more for its preservation, than the most numerous and disciplin'd Army. May we not apprehend the fall of an House, when we see the principal *Pillars* of it removing. *The Righteous is an everlasting Foundation*, saith *Solomon*; *Fundamentum seculi*, as some renderit, the foundation of *his Age* and Generation; as if the Happiness and Peace of any Age depended on the Righteous who live in it, and when they dye, the Foundations are removed. They are the Repairers of Breaches, the Restorers of Paths to dwell in, the strength of a People, the Saviours of a Nation. By their Examples, Councels, Authority, Interest, and Prayers, they do their utmost to stop that Current of sin, which brings Desolation.

Isai. 6. 13. Mich. 7. 1, 2. 2 Jer. 1. Ps. 112. 1. 2 Kings. 2. 12. Prov. 10. 25. Isai. 65. 8. Obad. 21.

'Tis for their sakes, that others are not destroyed, that national mercies are given, and continued; and desolating Judgments kept off. A Vineyard is watered and fenc't for the sake of the Vines which bear fruit; otherwise it would quickly be laid waste, and the wild Boar of the Forest suffer'd to enter. How often had God destroyed the *Israelites*, *had not Moses, his chosen, stood in the breach*? A whole City is spared at the Intercession of *Lot*. Had there been *ten* Righteous Persons in *Sodom*, it had been spared; and when that number was not found, yet it could not be destroyed, till *Lot* was gone. No wonder therefore, when such Intercessors are removed, if Judgment follow; as when the Wind ceaseth, the Rain falls. When there are but a few left to stir up themselves to call on God, and know how to wrestle with him for National mercies, no wonder if *God hides himself* from a professing People, *and consumes them for their Iniquities*; for such are *taken away from the Evil to come*. While they continue, a storm is often delayed, and Judgment deferr'd;

Ezek. 22. 30, 31. Psalm. 106. 23. Gen. 19. 21, 22. Isai. 64. 7. Isai. 57. 1.

as

as the Wars in *Germany* till after the death of *Luther*, who was wont to say, that God would be Propitious, and spare 'em as long as he liv'd, and no longer. God will not sweep a Land with the Besome of Destruction, till the greatest part of his *Jewels* are pickt out of the Rubbish; and the Residue shall be taken care of. For their sakes he will spare a *Remnant*, and not make an utter Consumption. And when they can't prevail to divert the Calamity, yet it shall be lessened, and shortned for their sakes. Exemplary Christians, and Faithful Pastors, are *the Glory of Christ*, and *stars in his Right Hand*; and therefore their Removal cannot but presage Judgment to follow. Especially when the Ignorance and Corruption of very many of those who succeed them, is a new provocation to hasten vengeance. When the nurseries of Learning are little better than schools of Vice; and the sons of the Prophets strengthen the hands of Evil doers; and the offering of the Lord is made to be abhorr'd among the People, thro the vileness of the sons of *Levi*; for this, saith God, I will feed them with *Wormwood*, and make them drink the Water of *Gall. Shall I not visit for these things? shall I not be avenged on such a Nation as this?*

Obad. 16, 17. *Mat.* 24. 22.

Ezek. 22. 26. *Jer.* 23. 14. *Jer.* 5. 30.

5. When the *Shadows* grow *long*. The *higher* the *sun*, and the farther from setting, after once he is risen, the *shorter* alway the *shadow*; but the shadows lengthen towards sun-set. 'Tis therefore an ill sign when *shadows* are *greatned*, and so much more ado is made about Ceremonies, and circumstances, and Points of Discipline and Church-Government, than for the weightier Things of the Law and Gospel. When those things, which by one party are acknowledged to be *Indifferent*, and but a *shadow*, and others fear to be *sinfull*, are yet imposed, and urged, as if they were *Necessary*. How desireable soever *Uniformity* in lesser things among Christians may be imagin'd, (as it cannot be proved that the H. Scripture doth require it, so) too dear Experience will assure us, that it is not practicable without *Persecution*: And even *that* likewise hath been *too long* tried without Success. 'Tis impossible but that *Christians* of different degrees of knowledg, different tempers, educations, &c. will have various apprehensions about doubtful points. It is not to be expected they should ever agree in the lesser disputable Doctrines, and modes of Worship; nor in any such Terms of Church Communion, as Christ

and his Apoſtles have not made neceſſary. But yet they ought, and very well may, bear with one another in thoſe Differences, for the ſake of their Common *Chriſtianity*; and ſo *hold the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*. „ It would confer much to this, ſaith *Dr. H. More*, (who liv'd, and dyed in the Communion of the Church of England,) „ if all Opinions and Practices in Reli-„gion, that either hinder, or do not promote the *Life of God* in „the world, were univerſally undervalued by the Church of God. „ —— and by this means all occaſions of ſquabling, and Conten-„tion about the ſhadows and Coverings of Opinions and Forms, „being thus removed and taken out of the way, it will be eaſier „ to perform what the Apoſtle exhorts to, *To keep the unity of the „Spirit in the Bond of Peace*. For then there would be no op-„portunity or pretence of any ones ſhewing himſelf to be Re-„ligious, but wherin true Religion doth conſiſt: and no man „would be able to buſtle with any credit, unleſs in the be-„half of what tends to the good of the People of God, and „of all mankind. To this purpoſe he adviſeth, That we all mind „the fundamental Myſteries of Truth and Intereſt, appertaining „to the Kingdom of God, in oppoſition to *the Papacy*, which „(he ſcruples not to ſay) *is the Kingdom of Antichriſt*, or that „City of *Babylon* wherein the People of God were held Captive. „We ſhould leave no ſtring or Taſſel, ſaith he, of our Ancient „Captivity upon us, ſuch, I mean, as wherby they may take hold „on us, and pull us back again into our former Bondage; but „look upon our ſelves as abſolutely free from any tie to them, „more than in endeavoring their Converſion and Salvation. Which „we knowing ſo Experimentally not to be compaſſed by needleſs „*ſymbolizings* with them in any thing, I conceive our beſt Policy „is ſtudiouſly to imitate 'em in nothing; but for all indifferent „things, to think rather the worſe of 'em for their uſing them: „As no Perſon of Honour would willingly go in the known garb „of any lewd and infamous Perſons. Whatſoever we Court them „in, they do but turn it to our ſcorn and contempt, and are the „more hardned in their own wickedneſs. Wherefore, ſeeing that „needleſs ſymbolizing with them does them no good, but hurt, „we ſhould account our ſelves in all things indifferent perfectly „free, to pleaſe and ſatisfie, in the moſt univerſal manner we „can, thoſe of our own Party —— ſupporting our ſelves on

Div. Dialog. 5. 6. 30. p. 412.

Eph 4 3.

§ 27. p. 398.

plain

„ plain Scripture, and solid Reason, to use and profess such things, „ as will be most universally agreeable to us all, and do make most „ for the safety and welfare of the true Kingdom of Christ. Such a Reconciling moderate spirit would do much to heal our Breaches: And if we will not know the way of Peace on easier terms, by uniting in the *substantials* of Religion, God may be provok't to cure our dissentions about lesser matters by sharper methods; to chain us together in a prison, for the common principles of the Reformed Religion; or solder us together with our own blood; as *Queen Mary* ended the differences between the pious Bishops, *Ridley* and *Hooper*, who in *Edw.* 6^ths^ time could not agree about Ceremonies and Vestments; The King could hardly get *Hooper* consecrated Bishop of *Gloucester*, without Conformity to the scrupled Ceremonies. But Queen *Mary* composed their quarrel, by a prison and a stake. Now they were perfectly reconciled, and wrote affectionate Letters to one another, as the dearest Brethren: and *Ridley* Bishop of *London* stoops with his Ceremonies to the others further Reformation, telling him in a Letter when the one was a prisoner at *Oxford*, the other at *London*, „ Now, *my dear Brother*, forasmuch as we throughly „ agree in those things which are the grounds, and substantial „ points of our Religion; against which the world so furiously „ rages in these days, how so ever in time past by certain *by-* „ *matters*, and *Circumstances* of Religion, your *Wisdom* and my „ *simplicity* have a little jarred; now, I say, be assured, that even „ with my *whole* Heart, God is my witness, in the bowels of „ Christ, I love you in the *truth*, and for the Truth's sake, which „ abideth in us, and I am perswaded, shall by the grace of God, „ abide in us for ever. „ The sense they had of these Differences, saith *Dr. Burnet*, „ ought to inspire all others with more mode- „ rate thoughts in such matters: It had been happy, if the Fires „ that consum'd those Good Men, had put an end to these Con- „ tests: and if those that have been since engaged in the like, „ will reflect more on the sense they had of them, when they „ were now preparing for Eternity, than on the heats they were „ put in concerning them, when perhaps Ease and Plenty made „ their Passions keener, they may from thence be reduced to have „ more moderate thoughts of such matters. Considering with al, (as the same learned Person argues, in his late Excellent *Pre-*

Fox Martyr: Dr. B. Hist. Reform. part. 2 lib. 2. An. 1552 and An. 1555.

To his translation of *Lactantius*, of the Death of Persecutors.

face concerning Persecution.) „ the sublimity of divine Truth, and „ what a poor low thing the mind of man is, we shall see reason „ to blunt a little the Edge of our spirits, if they are too sharp „ in such matters. ----- and if Education and Temper, (which „ prepare men for some opinions, and prepossess them against „ others) have hit together, it will require a very extraordinary „ elevation to rescue a man from their force. ----Among all those „ that differ, some must be in the wrong, and those who have „ the power in their hands, may possibly be of the wrong side, „ and in that case, all their severity (upon the account of such „ differences) is turned against the Truth, and those who believe „ it. ——Our being subject to error ought at least to have this ef- „ fect upon us, as to keep us from being too ready to judge hardly „ of those who are of another mind, or to use them roughly for „ it, since they may be in the Right, and we may be Mistaken; „ at least, they may have very probable Reasons for their Opi- „ nions, which if they do not quite justifie their Mistakes, do „ very much excuse and lessen them. ---As to the great Controversy „ concerning the Obligation which lay on the *Gentiles* for obeying „ the *Mosaical Law*, tho it were judged by the Apostles against „ the *Judaisers*, yet how gently are they treated, telling them, „ that the Kingdom of God, or the Gospel, did not consist in „ those scrupulous distinctions of *Meats* and *Drinks*, but in *Right- „ eousness*, *Peace*, and *Joy in the H. Ghost*; and that every man was „ to endeavor to be *fully perswaded in his own mind*, and was „ not to *Judge his Brother* in such things, but leave him to the „ Judgment of God. With much more to the same Purpose.

Secondly, Upon such Reflections as these, what *Counsel* may be given? as a means to continue the *Light* where it yet shines, and render it more steady and glorious, (notwithstanding the threatning Tendency of any Dark cloud) and likewise to help what we can to recover it again in those places, where a *Night* of Darkness hath overspread our Brethren? The Directions will principally concern *English Protestants*, in such Duties as these:

First, *Thankfulness to God* for past and present Mercies, in our own Land, with *Sympathy* and *Compassion* towards our Suffering *Brethren* in other parts of *Europe*. God sent the Word of Life, the Blessed returning Light of the Gospel to shine early,

early upon these Nations, by the Doctrine of the *Reformation*, scattering the darkness of Popish Errors, discovering the true Religion, freed from the Corruptions and Impostures of men, from a Burden of Ceremonies almost *Jewish*, and of Superstitions and Idolatry almost *Pagan*. This Light hath been continued by an able and faithful Ministry. No Country in the World hath had greater, or on all accounts equal, Advantages with our own in this particular. Forreigners have admir'd the Burning and shining Lights in our Candlestick. And if in any part of *England* there is any defect of this Light, 'tis part of our sin, and Punishment. As *Men*, as *Christians*, as *English Christians*, our Portion hath been, that of the *Firstborn*, greater than our Brethren have enjoyed. And tho we have waxed fat, and lifted up the Heel, forgot the God of our Mercies, and provok't him by our Ingratitude; yet with what admirable Patience hath he born with us? By what various methods hath he called us to Repentance? Warning us by lesser strokes, and then turning from the fierceness of his Anger? saving us for his own Names sake, when our own Follies, or the Malice of our Popish Enemies have brought us within a step of Ruin? How often hath he defeated their Counsels, prevented their Cruelty, and brought their works of Darkness to Light? *Many a time and often*, may we say with the Church, *Ps.* 129. *have they afflicted me from my Youth, yet have they not prevailed.* God hath cut in sunder the Cords of the Wicked, tied up their hands, broken their Measures, baffled their Projects, discovered their plots, and cut out other work for 'em, so that they could not hitherto accomplish their Enterprize, (and God grant they never may) of Extirpating the Reformed Religion out of these Islands. What Gratitude do we owe to God, when we Consider the many deceived, oppressed Nations of the Earth, that are without Knowledge, Holiness, or Peace? The vast Countries under *Heathenism*, *Infidelity*, or *Popery*; While *Brittain* still continues to be *Emanuel*'s Land. Hath any Nation under Heaven been honoured with more signal marks of divine Favour? How many and famous have our Deliverances and Salvations been? which all about us observe, and say, *The Lord hath done Great things for them.* *Ps.* 126. 3.

At the same time while we have been spared, others have been made Examples to warn us; his Anger hath smoakt against

his own Inheritance in other places. Our Brethren (especially in *France* and *Piedmont*) have been exposed to the Rage of barbarous Persecutors; multitudes imprison'd, tormented, executed, innumerable families and almost whole Provinces ruin'd, Ministers banisht, Temples demolisht, and a thousand Out-rages committed against the Professors of *the same Faith*, that we as yet quietly profess and own. Their solemn Assemblies have mourn'd, and their Blood been mingled with their Sacrifices, while we have had the liberty to worship God according to the Rule of the Gospel, and at the same time sit peaceably under our own Vines and Fig-trees. Their Harps have been hanged on the Willows in *Babylon*, while we might sing the songs of *Sion* in the publick Assemblies of his People: and our Country been made a Refuge and a Sanctuary to the *escaped Remnant*, who are as Fire-brands pluckt out of the Burning, and in their Exile state have experienced the generous and Christian Charity of *Great Brittain*, *Holland*, and some other *Protestant* Countries.

Shall we not then mingle our *Tears* with the dust of *Sion?* and put on sackloth, when she is thus covered with a cloud? Shall we not weep with our Brethren, that weep for the loss of their Pleasant things? and feel the Irons entring into their souls? Shall we gratifie our Pride, and put on our Ornaments, and indulge our selves in Luxury? While they are stript naked and afflicted with Baldness; while they are fed with the Bread of Adversity, and the Water of Affliction? such shall go *Captive* with the First that go Captive, and *this their Iniquity* shall not be purged away.

Isai. 22. 12, 13, 14.

Secondly, *Humility* and *Cautionary Fear*, in opposition to vain *Confidence* and *Presumption*, concerning any *particular* Church or Nation.

Let us not trust in lying words, saying, *The Temple of the Lord*, as if because we have received the Knowledge of the Truth, rejecting the Corruptions of the *Roman* Church in Doctrine and Worship, that no Corruption of Manners could provoke God to punish and to destroy us. Some build their Confidence of our safety on the vast Numbers of *Protestants*, on the strength of the National Church, on the Multitude of those who by common Interest are obliged to defend it, and on other such con-

considerations for the present, or with reference to the future, which may be of some weight to a meer Rationalist; but if God, upon the Provocation of National Guilt, be risen out of his Place to execute Judgment, he will reject and shame us notwithstanding our Confidence, except we Repent. For whatever may be apprehended to be the immediate Occasion of a People's Ruin, in vain do men think to obviate and prevent it without making peace with *God*. And whoever be the Instruments of Calamity to a People, 'tis the Justice of God, as provok't by sin, that must principally be attended to: without which we can be confident of the success of nothing that is attempted for our Preservation. 'Tis he who in righteous Judgment permits an open Enemy to prevail, or suffers a most unseasonable Misunderstanding among them who should Unite: Tis He who *mingles a perverse spirit* among those who have manifold obligations to agree together. If the Voice of Union and Concord among *Protestants* cannot be heard, at a time when there are most pressing and importunate Calls to it, *it is of the Lord*, who doth not give an Ear to hear, nor a Heart to consider. Thus we find it concerning the Division of the Ten Tribes of *Israel* from the two. *Isai.* 9. 14. *1 Kings.* 12. 23, 24.

Some are Confident on other grounds, and expect the speedy accomplishment of many *Prophecies* and *Promises* of the latter days, and presume to speak positively as to the time. But how uncomfortable will be the Disappointment, if we should conclude for one time, when God hath determin'd another at the distance of several years? How many Holy Men have been mistaken already, and lived to see themselves Confuted? How different are the Opinions of Learned and Good men concerning the Calculation of the Times in the Apocalypse? as to the Slaying and the Resurrection of the Witnesses, and the pouring out of the Vials, whether they have already emptied themselves upon their proper objects, or when they shall; when the 1260 Days of the Woman's Wilderness State shall expire, and *Babylons* Time and Day be no more, (to determin which we must know when it began,) how different are the Opinions of Learned *Protestants* as to the *Time* of these things? Let us not therefore anticipate the Counsels of God, (the vision being for an appointed Time) by too positive Conclusions as to such things; but give him

Glory,

Glory, as the fitteſt Judge of the Times and ſeaſons, wherein to accompliſh his own Great and Holy Purpoſes.

Neither can we argue from any unfulfilled Prophecies the preſervation of any particular Country, or Church, after great and general provocations, without ſuitable Repentance and Reformation. And thô that of all others be the moſt neglected and deſpiſed method of national ſafety, (the moſt think by Politicks, and Numbers, Confederates, and ſuch imaginary Fences to keep off danger) they will yet find, that they cannot more deſpiſe Repentance and Returning to God, than he doth contemn, and will defeat and ſhame all their wiſe Counſels and Contrivances without it. Therefore the next and principal Duty we are called to is,

Thirdly, *Humiliation* and *Repentance* among *Proteſtants* of all Parties and Denominations, for their reſpective Guilt, with ſerious endeavors to promote practical Holineſs, and Reformation of Manners. All have contributed to provoke the Anger of God, and more or leſs have been faulty in our carriage to one another; and therefore it becomes us all to ſearch and try our Ways, and turn unto the Lord. God and Men are our Accuſers; we have opened our own ſhame, and it cannot be hid; and the fire is already kindled which reveals our ſin in the effects of it; 'tis no time for any Party or Profeſſion to ſtand upon their Credit, and excuſe themſelves; but rather endeavor to turn away the diſpleaſure of God, by falling at his feet in penitent Confeſſions of ſin, and ſincere Repentance.

Without this, all other methods will be ineffectual, and the Anger of God will moſt eaſily and certainly bear down before it all the little Banks and Ramparts that humane Policy or ſtrength can oppoſe. It will prove a dangerous and fatal Miſtake for us to imagin by any other means, if this be neglected, to be able to provide for our ſafety. The Folly of the ancient *Gauls* related by *N. Damaſcen*, may move our Compaſſion, who when the ſea broke into their Country, went and ſtood in the breach with their weapons in their hands: and we ſhall be guilty of the ſame or worſe folly, if we think to ſecure the intereſt of Religion in *England* againſt a threatning Inundation, by any Humane Expedients whatſoever, without Repentance.

De moribus Gentilium.

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The use of Wisdom and Prudence is now if ever seasonable; but that *alone* is not to be trusted to: for the Highest Wisdom of any People, under such a Guilt as ours, is to make Peace with God by Humiliation for sin. Whilst this *Achan* remains undiscovered or indulged, the Camp of *Israel* will be troubled, and we shall not be able to stand before an Enemy. An Heathen *Cato* (as we are inform'd by S. *Augustine*, who commends the saying) could tell the wise and warlike *Romans*, that it was impossible their Commonwealth should flourish, *stantibus Manibus, ruentibus Moribus*, thô their Walls were never so firm, if their Manners were degenerate. Our Lives and Conversations must protest against the Corruptions of *Popery*, if ever we keep it out. 'Tis a dismal symptom of an approaching Darkness, that so few in comparison are awaken'd to a due sense of this obligation: God's Calls unto it are more loud than ordinary; and we never seem'd to be more deaf to such a voice than now. God may justly complain of us, as he did of the *Israelites* of old, *I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man Repented him of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done?*

De Civitate Dei, lib. 1, c. 33.

Jer. 8. 6.

This therefore we must in good earnest set about, if ever we are established and saved: Every one must reflect, and mourn for his own sins in particular, and then for the sins of others. There is no party or sort of men among us who have reason to think, that all the sins, whereby God is provoked, and which are to be confess'd and reform'd, are among those who differ from them. I am far from laying the Guilt of National sins to *any one party* of *Protestants*, because there are no Orders and Degrees of men, no Particular Societies or Parties, in Cities or Country, (however some Individuals may have approv'd themselves to God) but need a call to Repentance.

Besides, the sins of Professors as such, in Formality, Barrenness, Conformity to the World, and decays of Faith, Love, and Zeal, they who have suffer'd for their *Non-Conformity*, have been too *Impatient* under their sufferings; and have set themselves more than they ought against the Authors or Instruments of them, and endeavor'd to make them odious. Instead of looking up to God, and praying for their Repentance, and endeavoring their Conviction in the spirit of Meekness; by Censures and Slanders, Bitterness and the workings of Revenge, they have

fled from Concord, and the way of Peace, and made the Breaches wider. What might tend to an Accommodation of our Differences, hath by neither ſide been ſo well entertain'd as it ought. Peacemakers and Reconcilers have been ill treated, and had little ſucceſs. The want of a Publick ſpirit hath alſo been viſible among the ſeveral parties, and is one miſchievous Conſequence of our Diviſions. Every one ſhifting for himſelf in a time of Common Danger; taking care of his own Goods and Cabin, with the neglect of what is neceſſary to preſerve the whole Ship from ſinking. There hath likewiſe been great *partiality* in our Eſteem and Affection, towards thoſe of one party, having mens Perſons (for the ſake of their Opinions) too much in Admiration; whilſt others, very deſerving of our Reſpect and Love, have been deſpiſed and undervalued. Neither is there any one Party but hath ſeem'd to ſuppoſe, that the whole Intreſt of Religion was more concerned, than it is, in the proſperity or ſufferings of themſelves, and thoſe of their Perſuaſion. I ſpeak theſe things in faithfulneſs to the ſouls of my Brethren, and include my ſelf as Guilty, deſiring forgiveneſs of God, and profeſſing Repentance.

I likewiſe beg of God, that ſo Conſiderable and Worthy a Body of *Proteſtants*, as *the Church of England*, may ſeriouſly reflect upon the ſeverities they have uſed to their Diſſenting-Brethren, to the ſilencing of ſo many Miniſters, (whoſe preaching might be uſeful) to the Ruin of ſo many Families, and the hindrance of Common *Chriſtianity*, by obſtructing the free Progreſs of the Goſpel of Chriſt, the endeavors of all who are qualified to ſerve that deſign, (were the number greater,) being little enough in ſo populous a Kingdom. Beſides the Ignorance, Negligence, and Scandalous Lives of ſo many of the Clergy, with the Corruption of the Univerſities, Eccleſiaſtical Courts, and Cathedral Worſhip: How hath the Conſcientious Diligence of ſeveral Miniſters been diſcountenanced and cenſured, by the Inſpectors of the Clergy, for omitting ſome part of the Rubrical Conformity, when ſuch as were manifeſtly ſcandalous have been better treated? In how many places have the more ſerious and Conſcientious *Chriſtians* been reproacht and proſecuted for their Non-Conformity, when Drunkenneſs, Swearing, whoredom, and ſcandalous Immoralities have been overlookt in others, or the

the guilty persons, so they kept to the Rites of the Church, been more gently treated, than Dissenters, thô otherwise sober and unblameable in their Conversations? Such things as these we are now called upon, by God and Man, to consider, and repent of. If all Parties do not see their Sin, how can we hope for a Cure?

If an Apology be needful for so much Plainness, I shall subjoyn the Words of the Reverend Mr. *Baxter* (for whose Ministry and Writings I desire, with many others, to bless God,) when he gives the Reasons of his speaking so freely of the Sins of Ministers, in his *Reformed Pastor*. „ If thoulands of you, „ saith he, were in a leaking Ship, and those who should pump „ out the water, and stop the Leaks, should be sporting or a- „ sleep, yea or but favour themselves in their Labours, to the „ hazarding of you all, would ye not awake them to their work, „ and call out upon them to labour as for your lives? and if you „ used some Sharpness and Importunity with the sloathful, would „ you think that man were well in his Wits that should take it „ ill of you? that should accuse you of Pride, self-conceited- „ ness or Unmannerliness, to presume to talk so sawcily to your „ Fellow-Workmen? or should tell you, that you wrong them „ by diminishing their Reputation? Would you not say, *The „ work must be done, or we are all Dead men? Is the ship ready to „ sink, and do you talk of Reputation? Or had you rather hazard your „ selves and us, than hear of your Faults?*

If after all the Warnings we have had, and the threatning Danger we are in, we will not be persuaded to Repent, and seek the Common Peace; hath not God told us in his Word, and doth he not show us in his Providence, that he hath other ways to humble us than those he hath formerly made use of? His Arrows are not all spent; he hath a Lash of Scorpions, if we remain Impenitent under former Rods. *Pestilence*, *Sword*, and *Fire*, have taken their turns, but without success. So that the Complaint of *Salvian* is applicable to us, *Nos Vrimur & secamur*, &c. no former Applications have wrought a Cure; and which is more deplorable, we grow worse by our very Medicines. We grant this in the General; but at the same time our Divisions have this ill Effect (among many others) that each party is apt to clear themselves, by laying the whole Burden on the other; whereas all have contributed to the raising of the Storm, thô

Rev. 9. 12, 20.

De Gubern. Dei. lib. 7.

thô few have the ingenuity of *Jonah*, who acknowledg'd, *it was for his sake*.

Can we say, that our Brethren in *France*, and other places, were *Greater Sinners* than we, whom God hath made to drink so deep of the Cup of his indignation? Should we not rather conclude, that Our sin will find us out? and that except we *Repent*, we shall also perish? When the *Jews* were in great danger, and as great security, notwithstanding the Anger of God against their Brethren of the Ten Tribes, they continued to *bless themselves in their Hearts, saying, we shall have Peace, we need not fear*; God commanded the Prophet *Isaiah*, to cry aloud, and lift up his Voice like a Trumpet, to tell the People their Transgressions: and the Prophet *Joel* calleth to the Priests and Elders to sound a Trumpet in *Sion*, to publish a solemn Assembly, to sanctifie a Fast, to gather the people, young and old, together, to humble themselves, mourn, and weep, to rend the Heart, and not the Garment, to confess sin, and deprecate Judgment, and seek the face of God for mercy; and withal, to turn from their Evil wayes; without which no solemn Humiliation will be accepted of God, but incense him the more.

Isai. 58. 1.

Joel. 2.

Therefore if ever our Breaches be healed, and National Destructive Judgments prevented, we must agree in this, to Repent and Reform, and do our utmost to retrieve and promote the Power and Practice of Serious Godliness. 'Tis *the Practical Love of the Truth*, with entire Devotedness to God, and Conscientious regard to our known Duty, that alone will be able to secure us from the Judgments of God, or be an Effectual *Preservative against Popery*, as a late learned Person hath proved and prest it. This has been recommended with great Light and strength by another, who is yet living, in answer to that Question, *What may most hopefully be attempted to allay Animosities among Protestants, that our Divisions do not prove our Ruin?* Where it is proved, that the best means to unite, establish, and preserve us, both against the Judgments of God, and the Endeavors of such as design the Ruin of the Common *Christian* Interest among us, is to Improve our Faith to greater Clearness, Certainty, and Efficacy, with respect to the substantials of Religion, and to evidence the fruits of such a Faith in holy Love and Obedience. Without this, tho we speak and write never so much

Dr. Owen, Serm. 10. Contin. Morn. Exerc. on 1 Pet. 2. 3. Ib. Mr. Howe, Serm. 4. on Gal. 2. 2.

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or well in defence of the Reformation, yet whilst our Adversaries behold our unholy lives, they will still open their mouths to reproach the Reformed Religion, and live in hopes of extirpating it. In vain is it hop't, that the most learned Pens can preserve the Doctrine of the Reformation, if our Vices contradict and undermine its Foundation. Unless our manners and Conversation do correspond to and credit the Religion we profess, we are very unlikely to transmit its Doctrine to Posterity, or to keep the possession of it our selves.

Fourthly, *To mourn* in secret for the *Sins of others*: This should accompany Repentance and sorrow for our own Sins. The publick Abominations for which God threatens to make the Land mourn, should be bewailed; and our *Protest* against them thereby enter'd, that God may not charge us with the Guilt of publick Transgressions. This must needs be *Acceptable* to God, as an Evidence of our Love to him, and of our Concern for his Glory; and *Seasonable* for us; as a Testimony of our affection to that Country and People to which we belong. When the Being of God is boldly question'd; his Providence, and his Authority mockt; his holy name blasphem'd; his Institutions prophan'd and polluted; his Christ (& our Jesus) vilified and despised, and by open Impieties crucified again; when his Glory is trampl'd on by abounding Wickedness, willful and bare-fac'd, so general and to such a degree, as is the usual Forerunner of Ruin and Desolation; Can we love God, or wish well to the Land of our Nativity, without mourning for these things? Can we consider the growth of *Atheism* and *Infidelity*, *Popery*, and *Prophaneness*, and not mourn? Can we see *Idolatry*, which God abhors, get ground, and so many Thousands in a neighboring Country receiving the mark of Antichrist in their Foreheads, and in their right hands, and such a multitude in our own land in a Preparedness to do it, and not be affected with the dishonour of God? not drop a Tear, or lift up a cry to prevent the effects of his just Displeasure? And if we love our selves, is there any better, any other method to provide for our own Preservation and safety? Whatever night of darkness and distress may come upon a Nation, Men of *this Character* have alway been favoured with special Protection; God hath *set a mark* on their foreheads for preservation, when the Destroyers have been Commissioned to execute Judg- Ezek. 9 4.

ment. He will cover their heads in the day of Battel, when his Arrows are ſharp in the Hearts of his Enemies. He will hide them in the hollow of his hand, provide a *Zoar*, a *Gath*, a *Pella*, ſome place of Retreat till the Storm be over; give them to find Favour in a ſtrange Land, or overſhadow them in their own, accompany them in Baniſhment, and open the Hearts and Hands of others to ſhow them kindneſs; *Moab* ſhall hide his Out-caſt, and *Cyrus* let go his Captives, and *the Earth help the Woman*, the moſt unlikely means and inſtruments aſſiſt and ſuccour that Remnant whom he will ſave. And if we ſhould be called to bear Teſtimony to his Name and Truth by ſuffering for it, ſuch a Temper and Practice will beſt diſpoſe and prepare us for it: It will ſecure his gracious Preſence with us; it will intereſt us in the Promiſe of his Aſſiſtance and Help; and after we have Confeſſed him before men, he will publickly acknowledge and reward us before the whole World.

Rev. 12. 16.

Fifthly, Earneſt *Prayer* to God for the Peace and welfare of *Jeruſalem*, and *that part* of it to which we are moſt nearly related. We are required, not to keep ſilence, or give him any Reſt, till he make *Jeruſalem* both a peaceable habitation, and a Praiſe in the Earth. When the hand of God is lifted up, there is need of an Enquiry after ſuch Interceſſors as will ſtand in the Gap, and turn away Wrath. 'Tis time to run with a Cenſer as *Aaron*, when the Fire of God is begun to fall down in our ſight; to make haſte, and humble our ſelves, and cry mightily to him, as *Ezekiel*, for the Reſidue of his People, when the Executioners are gone forth with a Commiſſion to deſtroy; ſaying, *O ſpare thy People!* ſpare the Remnant of thy ſcattered flock! ſpare our Brethren in *France* and *Savoy*, the Witneſſes of thy Truth! ſpare *Great Britain* and *Ireland*! ſpare the *United Provinces!*

Iſai. 62. 1. Ezek. 22. 30.

Numb. 16.

Ezek. 9.

Could I repreſent the languiſhing diſfigur'd Countenance of the *Reformed Churches*, mourning in Sackcloth and Aſhes in ſeveral places; whole Countries, which have been as *the Garden of God*, whoſe Inhabitants are now as the Generation of his wrath; the great multitude that once walked with *Chriſt* in the Profeſſion of the Truth, that now walk no more with him; the many neighbouring *Vineyards*, from whence a few years ago he had *pleaſant fruit*, now broken down and laid waſt; could I repreſent theſe things fully, you would ſee the Neceſſity of more earneſt Interceſſions

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with God on the behalf of *Sion* than ordinary. But tho ſhe ſtretcheth out her hands, *Who is there of all her Sons that ſhe hath brought up to comfort her? Who among all her Lovers to pity her? Who among all her Sons to guide her, and take her by the hand?* Even when ſhe is ſhaken, and in danger to have both her Pillars, of *Truth* and *Peace*, broken and caſt to the ground? She ſits in the duſt, and few or none ſeem to care for her: and tho they ſee her ſorrow, and hear her complaints, will hardly offer up a prayer more than at other times for her Deliverance. *Lam.* I. 2, 17.

However, we have the greateſt Encouragement to make uſe of Prayer in this Caſe of all others, becauſe all the great things promiſed by God, and expected by his People, muſt come this way. The Return from the *Babyloniſh Captivity*, tho the time of it was adjuſted in the promiſe, muſt be brought about by prayer. The wrath of God was poured out on the *Pagan* Perſecutors, in anſwer to Prayer. The Judgements of God againſt the Adverſaries of the Church, come out of the ſame Cenſer, into which the Prayers of the Saints are put. The ſeventh and *laſt Vial*, that ſhall make an end of the Enemies of *Sion*, is to be opened by Prayer. Let our own Caſe, or the condition of our Brethren, ſeem never ſo deſperate, we may obtain Relief this way. When every Reed, on which we lean'd, is broken; and our fingers knockt off from all humane Dependance; when the ſecular Arm of Help ſhrinks and withers, and nothing but a Wonder can prevent deſpair; when every Prop is remov'd, and Confidence blaſted; When all our Phyſicians prove of no value; when all Expectations of ſuccor are defeated; when only an Infallible Eye can direct our way, and an Almighty hand preſerve from Ruin; when no Plaiſter will ſtick to our ſore, no balm cure our wound; all our Anchors come home, and our hopes aſhamed; when the Clouds return after the rain; and threaten ſuch a Storm that Affliction ſhall not need to riſe a ſecond time; under the ſmarteſt ſufferings, and deepeſt diſtreſs for the preſent; under the ſaddeſt ſymptoms, and darkeſt proſpect for the future; thô we ſhould hear the ſound as of many Waters, and every thing from day to day have a worſe appearance than formerly, yet by *Prayer* to God we may ſtay and ſupport our ſpirits, both with relation to our ſelves, and the caſe of our Brethren. * Such is the Harmony between the Prayers of the Church and the *Counſels* of God, that *Jer.* 29. 10. *Rev.* 8. 3, 4. *Rev.* 14. 15, 16, 17.

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a spirit of serious fervent supplication for *Sion* is a *Token* of approaching Deliverance. * This succour will be able to reach our Brethren at a *Distance*, in other Countries. * This is the most *speedy* Assistance we are able to send them, by engaging God for their Help. * This is an *Invisible* Help, which no Adversaries can hinder or prevent: These Arrows against *Babylon* will kill in the dark, and no force or power can obstruct their Execution. * This will avail sometimes when nothing else will; some Devils will not be dispossest, some difficulties will not be removed, some Dangers not prevented, some mercies can not be obtained, any other way than by Fasting and Prayer. * By this *one Christian*, any one, the poorest, the meanest upright *Christian*, may help and succour a great Many others, yea the whole Church. This *Every* Good man is capable of, who can do nothing else; this Bow and Arrow will fit the weakest Arm, wherewith to combate the Adversaries of *Sion*. * And there is *no case* wherein this may not be of *some* Advantage; as no other means will be effectual if this be neglected. We shall obtain spiritual Mercies for our own souls, as the Reward of it; and it may be a temporal Preservation for our Persons and Families: or we may prevail for the deferring of publick Judgments, and a longer Time of Tryal; or for the mitigation and lessening of them; or for a Preparedness to meet with God in the way of his Judgments; and the sanctified Improvement of Publick Calamities; or obtain favour for more Innocent Posterity. And shall at least have the Consolation, of having discharged our Duty to our Brethren, and to our Country, and of having manifested the Affections of Children, who are sensibly affected with the Anger of God, and do what we can to make up the Breach.

Let us therefore be much in *Prayer* to God for *Sion*, in secret, and in Company with others, as we have opportunity: with deep Humiliation and Repentance, with sincere aims at the Glory of God, and the Honour of Christ, with Faith and Confidence, with Fervency and Importunity, with stedfastness and Perseverance: Notwithstanding the Inefficacy of any former attempts this way, from the seeming Delay of God to answer; Considering, that all the supplications and Intercessions of the *Israel* of God in former Ages will have a real hand, in the final Deliverance of the Church, and our Prayers must help to fill up

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the measure, and *hasten* the Coming of the Son of Man.

How far the Great Argument, used by the Church of old, *We are called by thy name, thou art yet in the midst of us, and what wilt thou do for thy Great Name?* may be pleaded by us, ought seriously to be considered. For the Case of a particular People and Nation may be such, as to give just grounds to fear, lest the Argument from the *Name* of God should make against us; lest the Honour of God, and the Glory of his holy Name be more concern'd to punish, than to deliver us. We would humbly Hope, that our Case will yet admit the use of this Argument, in our Intercessions with God. *Thou art yet in the midst of us*; the Relation is Reciprocal between thee and us; and we hope it will be for the honour of thy Name to save us. *What wilt thou do for thy Great Name? i. e.* what becomes of us and of our Posterity after us, is no such great matter; tho we should perish, and our Name be blotted out from under Heaven: but if the B. Gospel be removed, or continue to be an Empty sound, if Prophaneness and Idolatry encrease and prevail, thy Holy name will be dishonoured, thy sacred Truth reproacht, the Glory of our Redeemer Eclipst, the fruits of his Death obstructed, and thine Adversaries will triumph, and say, that thou hast born Testimony to their Errors and Impieties, favour'd their Designs, and Countenanc't their Wickedness. Lord! What wilt thou do for thy Great Name? And may we not say, that *Thou art yet in the midst of us?* tho there are not so many visible Tokens of thy *special Presence* as formerly, either with Ministers or People; yet thou dost walk among thy Golden Candlesticks, and now and then let us know that thy Glory is not quite gone: There are some, *(Oh that there were more!)* who feel and live those Truths which others only talk of; who bear the Image of their Lord, and their souls cleave to him, and follow hard after him; who delight in his ways, and love his Interest and People with a cordial affection, to whom the honour of his Name is incomparably dear and precious who value his love, and communion with him as their felicity; who mourn for the sins of others, and to whom the Reproach of the solemn Assemblies is a dayly Burden, &c. Oh Continue this Presence of thine! and vouchsafe more visible enlarged effects and manifestations of it! which we may rather hope for, while he is thus in the midst of us, than to obtain

John. 3. 9. *Jer.* 14. 9, 21. See Mr. Howe's treat. of the Right use of that Argum. in prayer from the Name of God 80. 1682.

a Recalling of it, when he is quite gone, as the *Cure* of a Diſeaſe, and the *Recovery* of health may more hopefully be prayed for than a *Reſurrection* from the dead. There is yet another thing very ſeaſonable to be joyned with Prayer, and which we are obliged to, whether we have more or leſs hope concerning any particular Church or Nation, and that is,

Sixthly, The Exerciſe of *Faith* in God concerning the *promiſed Salvation* and *Perpetuity* of the *Chriſtian Church*. The Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt her; ſhe ſhall not dye, or Death (whoſe mouth is the Grave) ſhall not be Victorious over her: the *burning Buſh* ſhall never be conſum'd. We think this and the other thing makes againſt the Church, and threatens to deſtroy it. Here one part is rooted out, there another is oppreſt, and the whole World almoſt wanders after the Beaſt, and the Falſe Prophet. *Edom* and *Amalek*, and *Moab* and *Ammon*, are all in a confederacy and Combination againſt *Sion*. But if it were yet worſe, we muſt live by *Faith*, that all ſhall tend to the accompliſhment of God's great deſign, of the Furtherance of the Goſpel; The truly Chriſtian Intereſt ſhall live, and flouriſh, and get ground after all oppoſition, yea by thoſe things ſhall it be advanc't, which we may apprehend as prejudicial to it. *God's thoughts are not as ours*, nor his ways as ours; what we think a threatning miſchief, may prove a great Bleſſing, and often doth ſo. What a Compaſs did Iſrael fetch from *Egypt* to *Canaan*, and yet God ſaith, he led them by *the Right way*? forty years in a journey, that might have been deſpatcht in ten days. He is never out of his way, or miſtaken in the methods of his Providence to fulfil his word. This we are moſt certain of, that the *Intereſt* of *Chriſt* and the Chriſtian Church ſhall live in the midſt of all ſtorms, be rooted and eſtabliſht by the moſt ſhaking Providences: and that when it ſeems *loweſt*, and moſt likely to ſink, it is the fitteſt time for the Wiſdom, Power, and Faithfulneſs of God to diſcover it ſelf. When none was found worthy or able to open the book, the *Lamb* takes it out of the hands of him who ſat on the throne. Our Exalted Saviour, who hath the Keys of Death and Hell, is not weary of holding the Scepter in his hand. He ſits at Helm, and ſteers the ſhip, and will not ſuffer it to periſh. Therefore no Depths, no difficulties, no delay of deliverance, ſhould diſhearten us. If God

Mic. 4. 11, 12, 13.

Pſal. 107. 7.

Rev. 5. 4.

will

will work, a *Fire not blown* shall consume his Enemies, and *Destruction* and *Fear* shall come together. *The Vision is for an appointed Time*, in the end it shall speak, it shall not Lye; *it shall Come, it will not Tarry*: tho to our *Sense* it may seem to Tarry, our *Faith* must correct the Verdict of our Sense, and make us wait for it: for not a word or tittle of what God hath spoken concerning the latter days shall be unfulfilled. *Job* 20. 26. *Rev.* 18. 7, 8.

When Providences are dark, and a storm is begun, we are ready to be puzzled, and cry out; *what shall we say to these things?* but let us remember what the Apostle adds, as a sufficient Reply, *If God be for us, who can be against us?* we are apt to question the *Power* of God: this is at the bottom of our unbelieving Fears; were it otherwise, we should not believe and trust God least, when Dangers are greatest. When *Abraham's* faith had overcome that Difficulty about the Power of God, he was able to triumph over all discouragements. God can do more abundantly for us than we can ask or think, and give Spiritual and Temporal Salvation at once; that upon *Mount Sion* there shall be *Deliverance*, and *Holiness* too. *Rom.* 8. 31. *See Numb.* 11. 19, 21. *Hebr.* 11. 17. 18, 19. *Obad.* 17.

Let us not then be discouraged: God rules over all the Kingdoms of the Earth, and changeth the Government, and Governours of them as he pleaseth. He hath tossed up and down the Powers of the world by turns: and can and will do the like again, as shall best serve the ends of his Glory, and the accomplishment of his word. Sometimes almost all the Princes of *Europe* have been *Protestants*; and on a sudden the scene hath changed, and the most of them have given their Power to the Beast. In one year, when in *Holland* the Synod of *Dort* was called, the King of *England* was a *Protestant*, and the Prince *Elector Palatine*, a Protestant, was chosen King of *Bohemia*, and *four* or *five* Princes in *Germany* were also *Protestants*: insomuch that some were ready to cry out, the *Golden Age* was come, and the *Glory* of the latter Times. But within *one year*, all was turned again: when the *Bohemians* were routed, and their new King and Queen forced to fly into *Holland*, being over-thrown by the *Imperial* Forces, in the famous Battel at *Prague*. Upon which the Protestant Union in *Germany* declin'd, and most of the Princes of it reconciled themselves to the *Emperor*, and only interceded for the *Palatine*, but in vain. We must trust in God, and live by Anno Christi 1619. *See Rushworths: Collect.* 17. *Jacobi* I.

faith, notwithstanding all the changes and revolutions of the world; tho the *Kings* of the Earth should not be *Nursing Fathers* to the Church, as well as when they are.

The last Counsel is *mutual Forgiveness*, and *Forbearance*, with serious endeavors, in our several places after *Christian Concord*. And because of the seasonableness of this advice to *English Protestants*, I shall speak of it under several Considerations, which may enforce the duty, and assist us in the performance of it.

First, Consider the *Common obligations* we are all under, *as Christians*, to *Brotherly Love*, and *Charity*; and to endeavor the Unity and *Peace* of the *Church*. These things were never discommended by any, and therefore it will not be needful to say much in the Praise of them: as that *Love* is the fulfilling of the Law, the End of Faith, the badge of a *Christian*, &c. that all Knowledge, Gifts, Utterance, Sufferings are in vain, where this is wanting. But 'tis Ignorance and mistake concerning the nature of Brotherly Love and Union, and of the way and means that lead to it, that hath made our Divisions and the Consequences of them so mischievous to the Church of God. For the Unity of the Church in Faith and Love may very well be preserved, without having just the same Conceptions of all Revealed Objects. Such an Union as that is morally impossible, and can never be expected; and therefore to endeavor the Peace of the Church on that Foundation, is an hopeless and vain attempt. As much may be said concerning an Union in doubtful, unscriptural Rites, Orders, and Ceremonies: None of our Lords commands of Unity, or directions for it, do either require, or so much as mention this. Many lesser Differences in opinion and practice are consistent with the nature, ends, and fruit of that *Unity* recommended and enjoyned by the Gospel; if such differences be but manag'd with a spirit of love, mutual Forbearance, and condescention.

Our great care must be to Remember our Relation to the *Universal Church* of Christ upon Earth, which is *first* in order of nature, by our *Baptism*, before our Relation to any *particular* Church; and is both more noble, more necessary, and more Durable. We must therefore take heed of confining our Love to any one Party of *Christians*, because of our mind and way, (altogether as unreasonable as to love only those of our own Age,

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Stature, or Complexion,) lest the great and more comprehensive Interest of *Christians*, and *Protestants*, be forgotten and neglected: lest a narrow Zeal for a small Party of *Christians* should prejudice the Interest of the Universal Church, or cause of *Christianity*. There is *one God*, and one Lord, *one Head*, and *one Saviour*, into whose name we are all Baptized; *one Covenant*, which all in Baptism make with this one God and Saviour; *One Spirit*, whereby we are all Regenerated; one *New Creature*, in all Holy *Christians*, begotten by this Spirit; *One Gospel*, the Rule of Faith and Life, and Foundation of our Common Hope; *one Body* of Christ, both *Mystical* and *Visible*; (all real *Christians* are members of the former, and all professing *Christians* of the latter, by visible subjection to Christ as their Head;) *one way* of Faith and Holiness, wherein all must walk; *one End*, and *Happiness*, which all expect; and *one Heaven*, where all the Children of God shall meet, and live forever, (however they fall out by the way) with one mind and Heart, in one Blessed work of Praising our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. From hence cannot but result an obligation to Brotherly love and Unity in seeking the Peace and Prosperity of the whole *Christian* Church; not reproaching others as Hereticks and Schismaticks, who are not of our mind in lesser things; not partially excusing the faults of them who are, and aggravating those of other *Christians*, and Brethren, whose salvation we should desire and endeavor, and not lay snares before 'em, much less hate and persecute 'em, because in some things they do not think, and speak, and act as we do. How unbecoming is it the Disciples of the Prince of Peace (his Ministers especially) to render the greatest part of *Christians* odious, and tempt the weak to Slanders, Judgings, and Envies, which are fruits of the Flesh?

If ever God will Heal his Broken Churches, a spirit of Love, and Unity, and moderation must be reviv'd, instead of fierce dividing zeal: and the H. Scriptures alone be thought a sufficient Rule; and no mens Confessions made the Test of Church Communion any farther than as plainly agreeing with the H. Scriptures. Concord and Union upon such terms in which we are all agreed, must be our Cure, if ever we are cured. But Healing Truths are never likely to be entertain'd among us till God give healing spirits to the Pastors, and Leaders of the Church. The

Concessions of the moderate men of all Parties, would be a sufficient foundation for Agreement, (in Christian love to one another) for the Interest of the whole; managing the lesser differences with mutual forbearance and condescention, without endangering or troubling the Church. Loving those with whom we cannot in all particulars joyn, corresponding with them in what we can, praying for and with them, Treating them as Brethren, and subjects of the Kingdom of Christ, pittying them in their Afflictions, Sufferings, Errors, and Temptations, relieving their wants as we are able, having no aversation to their Persons, not seeking their Hurt, or rejoycing in it, not judging or censuring them, (any otherwise than natural Reason, and the Rule of Scripture will allow) much less rejecting them from the Body of Christ, by unchurching of 'em.

They who are thought to go farthest from the Church of *England*'s Discipline, while they all acknowledg the Doctrine of the 39 Articles, however they may be accused, have declared their Moderation, as to their Brethren from whom they differ, in as full and charitable Expressions, as can well be desired; „ (*) God forbid, saith Dr. *Owen*, that any such thought should „ enter into our Hearts, as tho the Churches constituted in all „ things according to our light, and the rules we apprehend „ apomted in Scripture for that purpose, should be the only true „ Churches in the World; and whilst we judge others to be *true* „ Churches, we shall not be much moved or provokt by their „ Judgment, who think ours are none, because we differ from „ them, and plead for Reformation beyond their measure. We „ have the same thoughts of the *Christian* Churches in *Europe*, „ called *Reformed*, the same love towards them, the same readi- „ ness for Communion with them, as we would desire any Disci- „ ples of Christ in the World to have, bear, or exercise towards „ us: We do not think that the things wherein they fail, where- „ in they miss, or out-go the rule, are in their own nature ab- „ solutely destructive of their Church State.

(*) Mr. *Phil. Nye* hath wrote a book to prove the lawfulness of hearing the Preachers in Parish Churches; and before him *Amyraut* against *Johnson*, Treatise of Evang. Love and Unity. p. 85, 86.

Dear Experience, one would think, should now call us to mutual forbearing one Another in Love. And whatever be the Reward of Reconcilers from men, (commonly to be ill thought and spoken of by many of the differing parties) yet he that calleth to Love and union, calls to *Holiness*. All that is against

Love

Love, is against Holiness, against God, against Christ, against his Spirit, his Church, and the Interest of Mankind. The want of forbearing one another in Love hath brought us more than once very near to Ruin. And how long, and how often have we been warned of this! The pious and judicious Mr. *Corbet* told our Brethren thirty years ago, „ That they who contemned „ All Overtures of Peace, Union, and Accommodation, might „ come to see the need, and know the want of it, as well as „ others; for who knoweth (said he) what God is doing, or „ where will be the end of his working, whose Judgments are „ unsearchable and past our finding out? And how often hath the Reverend Mr. *Baxter* told the world, to the displeasing some of all Parties, that what Party soever it be that endeavors a Union, by the Extirpation and Ruin of the other part, whether *Episcopal*, *Presbyterian*, *Independent*, or *Anabaptist*, is Schismatical, and takes the way of Defolation. *Preface to his Interest of England.*

Secondly, Consider the impossibility of our agreement in things *Dark*, *Doubtful*, and *Numerous*; and the unreasonableness of endeavoring it by ways of *Violence*. The terms of *Christian Union* laid down by the Apostle, 4 *Ephes.* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. are few and sure, plain and possible. And after all the methods that have been tried by any, to bring us to unite upon other terms, than those of the Scripture; we see they are as far from effecting it as ever. Every one must endeavour to be fully perswaded in his own mind, as to what he is to believe and practise in things sacred and Religious; nor may he make his own understanding the Rule of Truth and Worship unto others. Every Conscientious man ought to be determin'd by his own reason and Judgment, regulated by the word of God, concerning his duty, as to the Edification of his Soul. For men to adhere to any particular Church, or to refuse communion with any, when opportunity offers, on any other account, than because they think it their *Duty* to do so, is neither becoming Men, or *Christians*. And they who are Conscious of their own Sincerity herein, will be most inclin'd to judge favourably of Others, who differ from them, and to hope that they also Act sincerely upon the like Principle, according to their Light. And will likewise be carefull how they fasten ill and odious *Consequences* upon those different Opinions which Others hold, if they be such as they disown, and would detest

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the Doctrines, if they were convinc't that any such Consequences did belong to them.

After all that can be said or done to justifie the Severities, which any have used in such Cases towards their Brethren, (I exclude none, who have at any time been guilty,) the greatest part of *Sober men* will still believe, that all *Power* from God to *Christian* Princes and Pastors, is for Edification, and not for Destruction: that he never gave any against his own Laws, and the Interest of the souls of men. They will still think, that they are most concerned, it should be, for the wellfare of their own souls; and can best tell what they find to be profitable or hurtful to 'em, and most for their edification; and that if no Humane Authority can tye up a man to eat that which he cannot digest, so neither to attend that Ministry only, which they do not find so much to the Advantage and Edification of their souls, as some other which God affords them. The different *Relishes* of the minds of men may here be considered, and the benefit of gratifying them in order to edification. For I know of some, and hear of many, who profess that they are never more Reverent, devout, and serious, and their Hearts more affected, than in the use of the *Common Prayer*: others profess with the like seriousness, as to themselves, that they Experience the Contrary. And shall we think it reasonable, that they should be obliged to the measures of the former? or that either should censure the other, as not belonging to Christ on that account? Is there any Law of Christ, any Rule of the Gospel, any duty of Love to the Brethren, that can require men to hinder their Edification? or to joyn in ordinary local Communion there, where they cannot attain the great ends of Church Communion? Nevertheless, we must be Careful not to *have the Faith of our Lord J. Christ with respect of Persons.* For there is a culpable Partiality with respect to Ministers, causing Envyings, Divisions, and Strifes, which the Apostle condemn'd in the Church of *Corinth.*

James 2. 1.

1 *Cor.* 3. 3. 4.

Were Ministers humble and self-denying, and did we more Earnestly desire and seek the Honour of God, the Advancement of Holiness, and the salvation of souls, we should rejoyce if the people could learn more, and edifie better by other mens Ministry than our own; tho it may be some error in Judgment that directed their choice. A true Mother who knows her Child is

Mr. Baxter Cure of Ch. Div. dir. 5. to Min.

like

like to thrive more by the milk of another woman than her own, will be so far from hatred or envy at the Nurse or Child, that she will consent, and be glad of it. Would a faithful Physitian rather let his Patient pine away in a Consumption, than be healed by another, whom the Patient (with, or without cause) prefers before him? I know there needs a great deal of *self-denial* unto this but I think it ought to be so, because the Apostle rejoyced *that Christ was preacht*, tho by them who did it in *Strife* and *Envy*, to add affliction to his bonds. *Phil.* 1. 15, 16, 18.

If any number of *Christians* judge, tho it should be by mistake, that the terms of Church Communion required of them are *sinful*, (and of doubtful and numerous ones very many are like to think so) can they act like Honest men to comply while they thus judge?

Will any be so unreasonable, as to desire me to do that to please him, (and punish me if I will not) when I apprehend I should displease God by doing it? Is it at all strange, that many serious *Christians* in a Country Parish, cannot content themselves with such Guides of their souls, as an Ignorant, drunken Patron shall think fit to put over them, who it may be are as bad as he? What if they think they have a natural Right to choose one themselves? As well as to choose their Physitian, or Lawyer, and rather, as the Consequence is more, and greater? especially since such a Principle is allowed by Leading men in the Church of England. „ For every man to Worship God according to „ his Conviction, (saith Dr. *Burnet*,) is *an essential Right of Humane* „ *nature*, Antecedent to all humane Government, and can never „ become subject to it. What the Rev. *Dean of S. Pauls* (whose singular Learning is so deservedly honoured in all the Reformed Churches,) hath discourst formerly on this subject, cannot be too often transcrib'd, viz, in the peaceable and Christian Preface to his *Irenicum*, and in the * book it self, *If he continue not in every thing of the same mind, Truth and Reason is still the same.* And Dr. *Sherlock* tells the A. B. of *Canterbury*, in the Epistle dedicatory to his Answer to the *First part* of *The Protestant Reconciler*, *That a Recantation of a Book is no Answer.* *Preface concerning Persecution.* * Part. 1. c. 6. p. 118.--123.

And let me add, that the Christian Design of that book, the First part of the *Prot. Reconciler*, and the Judgment and Moderation of the Worthy Author, it is hoped will now be otherwise esteem'd of, than three or four years ago, when so Great a man,

as *the Master of the Temple* treated both with so much sharpness and contempt.

„The Laws of Christ, saith *Dr. St.* were meek and gentle; „the Duties he required were necessary, just and reasonable. He „that came to take away the insupportable yoke of Jewish Cere„monies, certainly did never intend to gall the necks of his Disci„ples, with *another* instead of it: and it would be strange the „Church should require *more* than Christ himself did, and make „*other* Conditions of Communion, than our Saviour did of Di„sciplesship. What possible reason can be given, why such „things should not be *sufficient for Communion* with a Church, „that are sufficient for Eternal salvation? and certainly those „things are sufficient for that, which are laid down as the *Neces„sary* duties of Christianity by our Lord and saviour in his word. „What ground is there why Christians should not stand on the „*same terms* now, which they did in the time of *Christ* and his „*Apostles?* was not Religion *sufficiently* guarded and fenced in „them? was there ever more true and Cordial *Reverence* in the „Worship of God? What Charter hath Christ ever given the „Church, to bind up men to *more* than himself hath done? and „to exclude those from her Society, who may be admitted into „Heaven? —— The grand Commission the *Apostles* were sent „out with, was only *to teach what Christ had commanded them*, not „the least intimation of any power given them to impose, or re„quire any thing beyond what he himself had spoken to them, „or they were directed to by the immediate guidance of the spi„rit of God. —— We never read the Apostles making Laws but „of things supposed necessary. When the Council of the *Apostles met* „at *Jerusalem*, for deciding a Case that disturbed the Churches peace; „we see they would lay *no other Burden* on the Gentile Christians „*besides those Necessary things.* 15. Act. 29. It was not enough with „them that the things would be necessary when they had requir'd „them, but they lookt on an *Antecedent Necessity*, either abso„lute, or for the present State, which was the only ground of „their imposing those Commands. There were after this great „*Diversities* of Practice, and *varieties* of observations among Chri„stians; but the H. Ghost never thought those things fit to be „made matters of *Laws*, to which all Parties should Conform; „all that the *Apostles* required as to these, was *mutual forbearance*

„and

„ and condescention towards each other in them. The Apostles „ valued not *Indifferences* at all; and those things 'tis evident they „ accounted *such*, which whether men did them or not was not of „ Concernment to Salvation. And what Reason is there, why „ men should be so strictly tied up to *such things*, which they may „ do, or let alone, and yet be *very good Christians* still? Without „ all Controversie (saith the *Doctor*, and *Experience will* confirm „ it,) the main in-let of all the *Distractions*, *Confusions*, and *Di-* „ *visions* of the Christian World, hath been by adding *other Condi-* „ *tions* of Church Communion than Christ hath done. Would „ there ever be less *Peace* and *Unity* in the Church, if a *Diversity* „ were allowed as to Practices supposed indifferent? yea, there „ would be so much more, if there were a mutual forbearance „ and Condescention as to such things. The *Unity* of the Church „ is an unity of *Love* and *Affection*, and not a bare *Uniformity* of „ Practice and Opinion. ——— Were we but so Happy, Chap. 6. „ as to take off things granted unnecessary by all, and suspected „ by many, and judged unlawful by some, and to make nothing „ the bonds of our Communion but what Christ hath done, *one* „ *Faith*, *one Baptism*, &c. allowing a *Liberty* for matters of Indif- „ ferency, and bearing with the Weakness of those who cannot „ bear things which others count lawful, we might indeed be re- „ stored to a true *primitive* Lustre, far sooner than by furbishing „ up some antiquated Ceremonies, that can derive their pedigree „ no higher than some *Ancient* Custom and Tradition. *God* „ *will one day convince men, that the Union of the Church lyes more* „ *in the Unity of Faith, and Affection, than in the Uniformity of* „ *doubtful Rites and Ceremonies.*

And after that unseasonable Sermon at *Guildhall* of the *Mis-* *chief of Separation*, yet in the Defence of it, the D^r. in the Pre- face propounds this very seasonable Question, „ *What then? Is* P. 81, 82. „ *there nothing to be done for dissenting Protestants, who agree with us* „ *in all doctrinal Articles of our Church, and only scruple the use of a* „ *few Ceremonies, and some late Impositions? Shall these Differences* „ *still be Continued, when they may so easily be removed? And so many* „ *useful men encouraged, and taken into the Constitution? Do we value* „ *a few Indifferent Ceremonies, and some late Declarations, and doubt-* „ *ful Expressions, beyond the Satisfaction of mens Consciences, and the* „ *Peace and Tranquillity of the Church?* In Answer, he saith, That

„tho he thinks there is no ground for ſcruple as to the uſe of „thoſe things, Notwithſtanding that, *becauſe the uſe of Sacra-* „*ments in a Chriſtian Church ought to be the moſt free from all Ex-* „*ceptions, and they ought to be ſo adminiſtred as to invite, rather* „*than diſcourage Scrupulous perſons from joyning in them; I do think* „*it would be a part of Chriſtian Wiſdom and Condeſcention in the* „*Governours of our Church, to remove thoſe bars from a freedom in* „*joyning in full Communion with us.* ——

Thirdly, Conſider the great *Miſchief* of our paſt and preſent *Diviſions*, to the Intereſt of Real Chriſtianity, the Reformed Religion, and the Peace and Happineſs of the Nation. The Contentions among *Proteſtants*, the paſſionate Heats among *Diſſenters* themſelves, and the ſeverities uſed by others to enforce an *Uniformity*, have diſhonoured the Profeſſion of the Goſpel, and coſt the Nation very dear on all accounts. Theſe things have hindred the uſefulneſs and fruit of many Miniſters preaching, and depriv'd us of the advantage of the publick labours of many hundred others, and leſſen'd the Authority and Succeſs of the Miniſtry in general, filling many with ſuch prejudices, that they have turned their backs upon all preaching. By this means the weak have been ſcandaliz'd, the doubtful ſtaggered, Infidels hardned, Scepticks gratified, Popery and Prophaneſs advanc't, thouſands of ſouls endanger'd, the Devil pleaſed, and his Kingdom built up, to the weakning of the Kingdom of Chriſt, and the Reformed Intereſt. Beſides the Good that is loſt, and the Miſeries procured hereby, the ſinfulneſs of Heart-Diviſions among Good men is greatly aggravated. The Provocation to mutual Revenge, and the advantage given to *Popery*, is that I wiſh all *Proteſtants* would conſider. As to *Revenge*, our Experience now tells us, that it is an effect of ſuch proceedings: tho I wiſh it could be ſuppreſt and cured; yet, conſidering the Corruption of Humane nature, might well enough be expected. This *Dr. B.* in the *Preface* above mention'd, hath repreſented with ſome ſharpneſs. „How unreaſonable is it, ſaith he, that they, who „cannot help thinking as they do, ſhould be made a ſacrifice to „the Rage of others, who perhaps have little more to ſay for „themſelves, than that they are in the Poſſeſſion of the *Laws*: „which in the next Revolution of Affairs that may fall out, „will be an argument ſo much the ſtronger for uſing themſelves

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See *Firſt Part of the Prot. Reconciler.* chap. 1. *Mr. I. Burroughs* Irenicum chap. 27, 28, 29, 30.

„in the same manner, because it is a just Retaliation on them, „for that which they made others to suffer ——.

The Reverend and Worthy *Dean of Canterbury* in his Preface to *Bp. Wilkins's* Sermons, commending his *Moderation*, saith „That „Vertue, however of late declaim'd against, must be the Temper „of the Members of the Church of *England*, especially of the „*Clergy*, if ever they seriously intend its firm establishment: and „do not industriously design by cherishing Heats and Divisions „among our selves, to let in *Popery* at those Breaches.

Most of those who renounce our Religion, and imbrace Popery, profess this to be the first great stumbling block, the want of Unity.

This their Priests of late in several Pamphlets have insisted on, aggravating our *Divisions* to prove the Necessity of an *Infallible Judge* as the Center of Unity. How unreasonably this is urged by *Papists*, who differ among themselves about Fundamental Doctrines of Faith, many of our Divines have shown. However the Church of *Rome* hath manifestly serv'd its own ends by procuring and animating the rigid Imposition of doubtful disputable terms among *Protestants*; that all those who could not conform to the establisht Rites, might be look't upon, if not as bad as *Papists*, yet as unpeaceable and Factious, and be provok't to do somewhat that might make them as unfit to be tolerated. Hereupon the *Papists* have pleaded for themselves as better subjects, or deserving at least an equal Toleration with Protestant Dissenters. And what some of the latter have suffer'd on the account of their different sentiments from the Established Church, hath tempted them to so much *Revenge*, as that the less considerate and judicious are too ready to joyn with the *Papists*, or any body, rather than with those by whom they have been oppress't: tho this be greatly to be lamented, yet it cannot much be wonder'd at; for *Solomon* tels us, that *Oppression will make even a wise man Mad*. And is it strange that some who do not see far before them, nor well consider what they do, and what forgiveness the Gospel requires, should be ready to say, we were as good joyn with the *Papists*, who promise us our Liberty, than adventure to be Ruin'd by *Protestants*. That there is not now much ground to fear it, and therefore that no Protestant ought to act on such a supposition, I shall endeavor to show presently.

Dr. *Stilling.* Idolatry of the Rom. Church. ch. 5. Mr. *Baxter*, safe Religion, *and other Treatises.*

Fourthly, The *Unity* of the *Adversaries* of the Reformed Religion against us, notwithstanding the Differences among themselves, deserve to be considered. We read of ten or eleven sorts of men of several opinions and ways in the matters of Religion, who all with one Consent joyn'd against *Sion*. *Psal.* 83. 5,6. Ten Kings of the Earth were of one mind, to give up their Power to the Beast, and make war with the Lamb, 17 *Rev.* 13. The Popish Clergy, that acknowledg the Headship of the Infallible Man at *Rome*, agree in their desires, and are bound to unite their endeavors, for the Extirpation of the *Northern Heresie*, *i.e.* the Reformed Religion. And shall not we agree and unite, for the preservation of that common Interest, against which so powerful a *Confederacy* hath been and still is engaged? yea, *may* we not very well do so, *Notwithstanding* our Differences, if we can but be wise and honest enough to forbear one another in love? Soldiers of different Nations, habits, and customs, may engage in the same cause: and notwithstanding their little quarrels with one another in their Respective Garrisons, may be unanimous (and therby Victorious,) when they come into the field. In a Battel between *Hannibal* and *Scipio*, when the two Armies joyned, we read that the *shouts* of *Scipio*'s men were far more *Terrible* than those of *Hannibals*, because being all *Romans*, they had almost all the same tone of voice, whereas *Hannibals* Army being made up of several Nations, their shouting was *less formidable* by reason of the *Variety* of their voices; it will not therefore follow that their success must be the less on that account. Our opposition to *Popery* might appear to them, and to the world, more *formidable*, if we were altogether of *one* speech, and of *one* way, and our shouts more uniform; yet the *Success* may be as *Great*, and the *Victory* as *sure*, tho we are not, if we are but wise enough to bear with one another in our lesser Differences.

Livy.

Fifthly, Since none of us do pretend to *Infallibility*, we have all the reason in the world to bear with one another. The principles of the Roman Church will better justifie them to demand a blind Submission to all that is required, and to treat them severely who refuse it, than any of the Protestant Churches with reference to one another. We all acknowledg our selves liable to mistake, and therfore should use gentleness and Compassion to our Brethren,

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that we think do Err; and pity them upon the account of Humane frailty and fallibility; which all would be more diſpoſed to do for others, had they a deeper ſenſe of their own. What two perſons in the world are juſt of the ſame Siſe of underſtanding, have the ſame apphrehenſions of things, or hold the ſame Opinions? What man in the world, but as he grows elder, (and without loſing time, doth alſo grow wiſer) but alters his Opinions in many points? Do not various Educations, callings, Studies, Company, imployments, intereſts & conditions in the world, make a mighty difference in the apphrehenſions of ſome from others, and of all men from themſelves at different ſeaſons? Beſides the various degrees of the grace of God to ſeveral Chriſtians, &c. all which ſhould incline us, as fallible mutable Creatures, to bear with one another. The *Papiſts* teach, that an impliſit faith in the Judgment of the Clergy is ſufficient to juſtifie the belief and practiſe of the People, and ſo may better exact an Uniformity in Doctrine and Worſhip, than we who deny it; and hold, that every man muſt *Judge* for himſelf.

It may farther be conſidered, that men cannot change their Opinions when they pleaſe, any more than their Stature or their Taſte. You may as ſoon fill a mans belly with a Syllogiſm, as alter his Opinion and Belief by Force, Till his Reaſon be convinc't, he will *believe* as he did. If any are willing to know the truth, and endeavor it, and practiſe according to their light, and deſire to live peaceably with others of a different perſuaſion; is it juſt and reaſonable, much leſs Chriſtian, that they ſhould be perſecuted and deſtroyed, becauſe they will not ſubſcribe ſome doubtful Articles, cannot ſit within the little Circle of ſome mens Opinions that are uppermoſt, or conſent to worſhip God juſt after the ſame manner they would have them? Eſpecially they who ſtand out to their outward Diſadvantage, whoſe temporal Intereſt pleads ſtrongly for a compliance; in ſuch a caſe, there is ground for Charity that they are ſincere. There is hardly any man but ſome time or other will allow ſuch Conſiderations to have ſome ſtrength. „The word of God, ſaith Bp. *Saunderſon*, „doth Expreſly forbid us, to ſubject our Conſciences to any „other, or to uſurp Dominion over the Conſciences of any. And „there is no hope that Religion ſhould be reſtored to her former „Original and Purity, till the wounds that have been made „wider

Caſes of Conſcience, lect. 3. § 29, 30.

„wider by our quarrels and diſſentions, being anointed with „the oyl of Brotherly love as with a Balſom, ſhall begin to „cloſe again, and to grow intire into the ſame unity of faith „and Charity. Bp. *Taylor* hath much to the ſame purpoſe of moderation, (not to quote the many places in his *Liberty of Prophecy*,) in his *Great Exempler*, or Life of Chriſt, he ſaith, „We ſhould ill dye for our Brother, who will not loſe a meal „to prevent his ſin, or change a diſh to ſave his ſoul. And if „the thing ſcrupled be *Indifferent* to us, yet it ought not to „be indifferent whether our Brother live or dye. ----- When „the *Evil* occaſion'd by the Law is greater than the *Good* deſigned, „or greater than the Good that will come by it in the preſent „Conſtitution of things, and the Evil can by no other Remedy „be healed, it concerns the Lawgivers Charity to take off ſuch „poſitive Conſtitutions, which in the Authority are meerly „*humane*, and in the matter *indifferent*, and *Evil* in the E„vent.

Part 3. p. 422, 425.

Sixthly, Let us conſider the *Unſeaſonableneſs* of our Diviſions, and backwardneſs to Union and Forbearance, at this Time. Neither the Church of *England*, nor Proteſtant Diſſenters are ever like to have *ſuch a time of Tryal* again as this, when mutual Intereſt doth ſo loudly call for an Accommodation of our unhappy Differences. For not only doth the Heighth and progreſs of abounding Wickedneſs and Impiety require the utmoſt Union of Hearts, and Hands, and Tongues, to promote Repentance and Reformation; but we all do *now* ſee the miſchief of our paſt Diviſions; all Parties in their turns have been ſenſible of it. All have complain'd of a Spirit of Bitterneſs, Perſecution, and Revenge; and therfore none ſhould imitate that which they condemn; or be averſe to that, which ſome time or other they have thought deſirable. The Diviſions of *Iſrael* made them a prey to their Enemies; and thoſe of the *Jews* expoſed them to Deſtruction by the *Romans*. Which they might have prevented by an early Submiſſion, or by uniting their Strength to defend themſelves; but by reaſon of their Diviſions, could do neither. So the conteſt between the *Greek* and the *Latin* Church ended in the Ruin of the Eaſtern Empire. And juſtly may God leave us to be deſtroyed of one another, or by the Enemies of our Religion, if we will not at laſt learn the way of Peace. Who will

* 2 *Kings.* 17. Sec. *Iſai.* 9. 21.

will pity us? who can help us, if having a prize in our hands, we will not know it, or improve it?

Ought we not to consider, that next to the Displeasure of God for the sins of *English Protestants*, this is the great *strength* of the Church of Rome, and their most Considerable Advantage against us? We need not otherwise fear their other Politicks, (for which they have been so cried up in the World, tho principally because they scrupled nothing that would serve as a means to attain their end:) were we duly sensible of *this one Policy* of theirs, to divide, and exasperate us one against another. The *Preaching* of their *Monks* and *Priests* will of it self do little to turn the Nation to *Popery*: if we may Judge by their printed sermons, they are not like to get much ground by their Preaching among a People, who in most places have been used to so much better. And as little need we fear their books of *Controversie*, notwithstanding the noise that hath been made of the Learning of the *Jesuites*; their strength hath of late been tried, to their irreparable shame (if they are capable of any,) and as much to the Honour of the learned Divines of the *Church of England*. Their Converting-books and Pamphlets have been so weak, and the Answers to them so strong and so many, that they are not like to prevail much that way neither; if *English Protestants* would but bear with one another, and not seek *Revenge*, which the juncture of Time doth dissuade from as unseasonable, as well as our Common Christianity doth forbid as unlawful, which will appear, if we consider,

Seventhly, Whether it be not Improbable, that the Leading men of *the Church of England* should hereafter commit the same Error again, to moleit and Persecute their Brethren for the Differences between us and them. All the world now sees at what door a great part of the severity against Protestant Dissenters ought to be laid: (so far as it was the sin of others, I hope God will let them see it, and give 'em Repentance.) And there are very many Parish Ministers in *England*, who are pious and peaceable, who preach and live holily, and never did consent to the Persecution of their Brethren, but endeavor'd to hinder it; I only wish they had been *more*. If it be said, they are *by consequence* Partakers of such a guilt; it hath been, and must again be replied, that if God should Charge undiscerned Consequences

upon them and us, none of us would be meet either for Church Communion now, or for Heaven hereafter.

The past faults and miscarriages of some, should not make us injurious to others. Far be it from us to imagin, that there are no Faithful Ministers of Christ in *England*, but such as are of our principles, and particular persuasion. Let us not refuse to love those that are Good, because many of their Church or Opinion are bad. Is there any Kingdom or Country upon Earth where the greatest part are not bad? Is there any place where the Religion countenanc't and encouraged by the Government, hath not many who comply with it for secular Interest?

The Author of the *late Apology for the Church of England*, as to the spirit of *Persecution*, hath said many things to this purpose: it will be good news to hear, that the greatest part of his Brethren are of his mind: that all Prot. Dissenters might believe, that the wisest and most leading men of that Church, do see their Error, (their *sin* too, might be added, if it be an essential Right of Humane nature, as Dr. *B.* saith, for every man to Worship God according to his conviction.) And we have great Reason to hope, that they will not again use severity to their Brethren, if it should ever be in Their Power; but come to a *Temper* in the matters of Conformity, as the seven Bishops have under their hands declared their disposition to do. And in the mean time, one of the *Articles* which the A. Bishop of *Canterbury* hath recommended to the Bishops under his Jurisdiction, is a *Tender Regard* to their *Brethren*, the *Protestant Dissenters*: At the same time assuring us, and all the World, that they are really and sincerely *Irreconcileable Enemies* to the Errors, Superstitions, Idolatries, and Tyrannies of the *Church of Rome*: and that all the unkind Jealousies to the Countrary, have been altogether groundless.

Let us not therefore be over sensible of past Injuries to the Hindrance of *Concord* for the common Good; lest we wrong the Church of Christ, and neglect the security of the Reformed Religion, and the welfare of the Nation and of Posterity, because others have wronged us. For however the *Jesuites* may now plead for Liberty of Conscience; no Protestant (*British*, or *Irish* especially) but must needs know, that of all Religions in the World, the *Romish*, by their avowed Principles, is obliged to be the most *Cruel*: Assoon as our divisions have made us weak enough,

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we have but too much reason to expect it, which God Prevent.

Lastly, Consider that we Agree with the Church of *England* in *great* and *many* things, and those things wherein we differ are comparatively *few* and *small*, and therefore mutual forbearance and Concord is *possible*, as well as desireable. Yea those things for which they are Hated and struck at by the Church of *Rome*, are not such *Doctrines*, or modes of *Worship*, wherein we *differ* from them; but 'tis for the sake of *those things* wherein we *agree* with the Church of *England*; and therefore in prudence we are obliged to espouse their cause, as our own.

The Reader may easily perceive, that all that I have said relates to the Union of *Protestants* among themselves, who, tho of different Persuasions in some External and Circumstantial things, do *hold the Head*, 2 *Coloss.* 19. and agree in the main and Essential Doctrines of Faith: But as to the Church of *Rome*, which perverts the Christian Faith, maintains and practiseth *Idolatry* and false Worship, and the declared Enemy to all *Protestants*, and by her Constitutions doth oblige all her Members under an Anathema, to root out, and to destroy them as Hereticks: how far those of her Communion may be tolerated in a Protestant Country, without sin or Danger, is a matter too large at present to dilate upon. It would seem very strange and Irrational for any Party of *Protestants* to strengthen the *Papists*, and contribute to their being set up in Power and Authority, especially in the Legislative power, in opposition to those of the *Church of England*, as fearing that *these will not* establish and allow them Liberty of Conscience; and imagining that *the Papists will*, who depend upon a forreign Power, and are not masters of their own Consciences, but have subjected them to another, whom they suppose Infallible. Surely from the Members of the *Church of England* we ought the rather to believe and hope *this*, because they have of late deserved so very well of all *Protestants*, by a vigorous and learned opposition to Popery, in a great number of select Discourses upon all the Considerable points in Controversie between us and the *Church of Rome*. And having done so much to keep out Popery as to the *Doctrine*, let us hope, and pray, and charitably believe, that they will also do their utmost hereafter to prevent *Persecution*, which is one of the worst parts of Popery in *Practice*. I con-

chide with the pathetical Exhortation of the Devout Bishop *Hall*: „ O Lord, how long shall thy poor Church see the dear sons of „ her own bloud bleeding about these Apples of Strife? The Enemy is „ at the gates of *Sarum*. How long shall we suffer our selves to „ be taken up with Circles and Angles in the dust? ye *Men*, „ *Brethren*, and *Fathers*! Help, for God's sake put to your hands „ for the quenching of this Common flame; the one side by Hu„ mility, the other by Compassion, both by Prayers and Tears: „ Let me beg for *Peace* as for Life, by your filial Piety and duty „ to the Church of God, whose Ruins follow upon our Divi„ sions; by your love of God's Truth, by the Graces of that one „ Blessed Spirit, whereby we are all informed and quicken'd, by „ the precious Bood of the Son of God shed for our Redemption, „ be inclined to *Peace* and *Love*. Tho our Brains be different, „ yet let our Hearts be one. ——— Let us have Peace with our „ selves, and War with none but *Hell* and *Rome*. *Amen*.

THE END.

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